

The Book of Disappearances / The Book of Tractations was written and conceived by Raul Ruiz as a simile of the multimedia installation *The Expulsion of the Moors*, his first museum piece, touring in the United States and Europe. As in the museum installation, the book underscores the irony and ambiguity of the Moorish and Christian history of Spain through reflecting and mirroring, as well as through the narrative illusion of historic fictions.

The Book of Disappearances / The Book of Tractations combines a collection of short fictions concerning the histories of Spain and Islam, both deeply rooted and interactive in that country. Christian and Moorish characters are re-created in a variety of tales about royal courts, the Inquisition, the army, the discovery of America, Velasquez, priest's tale, the leaden books of Sacromonte, the art of memory and the magic of forgetting, conversations between shadows, and mathematical equations depicting music and paintings.

Each fiction functions as a piece of the "puzzle" along with religious symbols and linked labyrinths. Shaping particular graphic elements and mirror images, Ruiz's work suggests recurring themes which are key elements in this particular history.

RAUL RUIZ

THE BOOK
OF
DISAPPEARANCES



now writing you

you the said missives and then there came to my mind the Spanish language which I have never spoken or known and in which I am

And then, having received the epistolar, I wanted to send they gave off sparks but would not burn.

and holy there. And trying to burn them, I was not able to, and charged me with saving his letters, and there was much of true incarcated, and he is supposed to have died soon after, and he Antonio de la Fuente, had been found guilty of Heresim and upon finding out that his friend the Nazarene, called Brother his own the Faith of Moses. And let it be said that he did this own words, to restore balance to the world, took and adopted as Merciful One. And my father, seeing this and wishing, in his Path and has venerated the One and Only the True, The year of the Beast, the false prophet of Israel has found the True longer exists. This year which the Christians reckon as 1666, the heard again. He did not die but for his sons and spouse he no

From my father Ibrahim ibn-Husssein Mulay I have never

To the reader

I know not whether I should address you in this way, O reader, because I know you will not exist^t while I live in this world. You have not been born, reader, and I fear you will not be born. You may ask, Why write to me if I do not exist? My dear reader, from your naughts of pure ^hope, I have been watching for a missive written in the air. God has wished this epistle come from ^{the} future to fall inexplicably into my hands. Here I am answering you. Your messenger is the warm wind that ^perfumes your coasts. In your^r unpronounceable tongue you have asked me who I am and what I ^{bel}ieve in. In that same tongue I answer you even though the words twist in pain in ^Cruel irons, betwixt terrible Castilian machine^s. May my mangled words, already dead, reach y^Ou. May these ideas in pain wandering cross the sea and the desert.

This is my reply.

I know not who you will be, reader, but I know you will be kind and astute.

I am a Christian but have not always been one. Perhaps you will never be one. I cannot know you, I have never known you, but you are my ^friend. I am answering your wind-borne letter. I know I am a Christian. I know why: I am a Christian because I speak Spanish. I love immut^able vowels. They have taught me to no longer fear the starry sky. Since I was a child, I have been afraid of the stars and have always known that in each star there ^{sh}one

(The text is illegible and has been guessed by rats.)
The manuscript ends here.

Warren: And Rodrigo? Does he suspect?

Alonso: A romantic and ferocious.

Warren: Not Egyptian? Twice hurtah!

Alonso: I is in Damascus and Morocco . . .

I hurtah and long live Egypt!

I told you and caress you.

Alonso: Quick and by Medina, feverish

I did not see, nor did his hanghty face appear

Coy, what I saw

Alonso: Silence!

Joined to that of Hermes Trismegistes.

I did seek thy fleeting face

When slight and furtive I

Do not say you did not see me

Alonso: What suffocation and what heat!

Warren: Following me, I follow love.

Alonso: I have you followed you yourself?

Warren: Plays not one role but three.

Warren: The rose of Markkesh

What role will it play here?

Alonso: And the flower enslaved,

With its double love for thee.

Warren: Enamored love within me,

Alonso: Enamored of your love?

an unpronounceable consonant and that in the space which separated one star from another there was one and only one vowel perpetually in movement. I imagined it vacillating between red and blue. Since even before I was born, since the moment God had me in His mind, since the moment He thought Himself before engendering Himself (but these are heresies from the past), since then I have spoken Arabic. The revelation of the Castilian language annihilated in one instant the fear of the stars. I came to understand that the vowels are five, like the fingers of the hand, like the five senses. They embalm and bury the fear of incarnation.

Now I know that God will not suffer to be seen, but makes Himself heard.

And it is for this reason He is on every part.

God speaks Spanish. Speak it again yourself and you will convert.

Of looks exchanged, and graces
 Then lose myself among the treasures
 I exit silent from the hall,
 Enfolded in my own sorrows,
 That I get lost all by myself,
 I so, so much in love do fall
 From head to foot.

Marion:

I do,

Aycha:

Do you love yourself?

Marion:

Enough that love which I do bear.

Already you yourself dost contradict.
 Though you **may** think without a conscience,
 Before you say just what you **think**.
 Marion, think of what you say
 But, too, no end without its prior
 And no beginning to **my** passion,
 I think that it was both,
 Instincts my heart.

Aycha:

No longer do I know which of the two
 What is he, and who is I?

Aycha:

And I do love her more than him.
 She doth love him more than I
 And second you in pleasure.
 To vex you in your sorrow,
 To comfort him who is your love,
 Who better than a woman

Marion:

You, a girl, and with a woman?
 'The blush doth rush up to my cheeks—
 Now do you understand my pain?
 'The slave, that girl from Marakesh!

Aycha:

To His Most Serene Highness

It has been said that the weapons of the men of the robe are the same as those of the woman, which are the tongue. May Your Highness acc**e**pt that with mine I come to acquit myself of my very own wit which I know to b**e** poor and weak, unworthy of the task which I undertake. I do feel and believe (with my eyes fixed on the Virgin Mary and on her Holy Son, her Divine Fruit) that Your succ**o**ur, help and clemency must needs great**l**y increase my intellect and sharpen my conceits, giving them the agility and force of those that shall be required in order to confront **w**ith the same h**e**roism and militancy with which Your invincib**l**e arm was able to contain and expel the infidel and heretic. May Your Majesty thus accept this Miscellany, which seeks to entertain and teach, combat and pardon, understand and g**iv**e refuge to those who have abandoned the **p**ath of the true faith, and closing **t**heir eyes to the l**igh**t, persist in denying the obvious. Fr**o**m my devoted labors and my fatigued idlings m**u**st arise, I trust, happy truths. Calumnies have sought to choke amongst the fertile underbrush of their forest**s** this humble fruit of my short life. I will be **a**ble to ignore them with the calm of the soldier of God **i**n the battle for the world. With supplicant affection I shall beseech God**d** that the earthly life of Your Highness be long in years and light in sorrows and suffering.

Kissing Your feet,
The least of your servants.

'That of a rose, a splendor,
 For whom a love me both dis-
 tinct and in return
 Now I understand; who is he?
 A slip away from a great fall.
 Pieces?
 In love, then all to pieces.
 You slip
 Arithmetic?
 Arithmetic and quite vulgar.
 Oh, nurse, you see me ill,
 I follow without knowing what you mean.
 The misunderstanding . . .
 Who . . .
 But stubborn he assails me.
 I draw back and then repent
 But the damned one resists.
 To spirit my dissipation.
 'Tis but a joke.
 As for your song . . .
 It seems to me that you are sad.
 What say, I do not understand you.
 Drowneth with my chant, like moons infinite.
 If hope is but a necklace, what good fortune
 My hope is that there be more moons than tears.
 Each tear a pearl, each pearl the moon.
 I wash my chant in the lagoon of the white dawn.
 Stringing tears on the necklace of hope,
 Enter Marion.

The copy of the Speculum of Fornicaries is coming with the Jew. It is true that *ma*ny of the recommendations and teachings were already *to* be found in the treatise on surgery by whistle *a*nd it may be said and affirmed that they are one and the same book, but others, much more, *co*ntain the same type of recommendations*s*, teachings and remedies. Arnold of Villanova also believes that the L-shaped erection brings about deep dreams and thickens the blood. The same is admitted by Gomez de Salamanca and Meister Johann. With respect to *w*hat they say of certain male members which suck and soak up blood from the wombs of women and in this wise kill them, it seems to me to be a *pu*rely idle speculation. The same for the erection of members which *vi*brate and make sounds and for members whose *f*oreskin is an inflated bladder and which burst and burn during copulation. Much has already been heard and said *ab*out pustules, and in the same way about the order of the twenty-seven positions, but *the*re is nothing that has not *alre*ady been said by Jacme de Gramont. With respect to the effect of *sw*eed phrases and *w*itty flatteries on speedy impregnation, everything has already *bee*n said by Alfonso Chirino in The Lesser Damnification of Medicine. The book of oils *te*aches the use of virgin oil for massaging and bracing the skin, whereby the female is warmed. Finally, there remains much to *lea*rn, and life is short and we will *d*ie ignorant.

And beside myself doth leave me
 All melodious a flourish
 Of your fate doth send me,
 Carmelite from wine nurture
 A salve for the vastest schisms.

Oxdoño: Rodrigo, what I ask you,
 What I beg you, is to be but you
 Inside you, and to be yourself;
 If you still have but one alms,
 Moderate your solicits
 And act, affected one!

Rodrigo: Now I am offended and take umbrage . . .

Oxdoño: Now I do renounce you, Turk!

Rodrigo: I could have your head . . .

Oxdoño: I do not recognize you, ingrate.

Rodrigo: You will earn a hate infinite.

Oxdoño: You will earn a love infinite.

Rodrigo: But now it is the hour to dine.

Fátima, Maricón! Serve us!

Scene 2

Enter Aycha, singing.

Aycha: They gave me a tyrant for a lord.
 His name I tell not, held by honor
 See if I am right, despite his terror.
 And ask him of his scorn and of my love.
 Wa-bi-hazzi an hawa' wa-khipar tu an-nisar,
 Wa-kullu 'nussin ba-da-hu bi-l-jyar.

Don Joan Manuel techyth in The Booke of the Unfynysshed that God hath cre^ate all thing unatchieved and endlesse uor to ^geue us ^{fr}adome & iurisdiction gyffe eche an cande oure selven. But the kunnyng^e and philosophicall and larned bileve^e that if God hath ^to us this unatchievement disposed, it is ^{to} care for and save it. And it is our due to save^e and greowen this unatchⁱevement, quych moste ende on the Day of the Last Iugement, Dies irae, the dradefull day of dome on quych^h all thinge will be fulfylled, and all knowynge fulfylled, and from ^this wuschynge fulfylled, that is, wylle fulfylled, will appere the Cytec of God wyth its casteels of light. And the unatchieved and the rude will betwixt the wylds and woddess be ^{lo}st and by the bestes of nohht devouryd and drou^uned in secis of nohht and devouryd by the toderkend ^sereyns and trytons. ^And these bestes will fulfyll the inperfeccion^s of the wastyd and the wound^did in thaire bealyes of perfyt and colourless nohht.

And so Ibn Mutamad Hazm, auctor and scribe, to shewe to all that there is in this world nohht any thyng fynysshed or atchieved, dyd compose this ^booke, made of chappitres and in quych nohht cleymys to be fynysshed or atchieved.

Rodrigo: Your charisma doth enchant me.
 Enduring Nature will endure what doth the **P**rism—
 Nor doth she tear herself with tongued sickness—
 Nor do textbook **w**ars her frighten
 With itself—for Nature cannot be confounded,
 Wild and windy make its deace
 The swif subjected of the fires phagocytic
 Harvested potatoes? I have seen
 Bitches barley a few poorly
 Spirited and perspicacious with its docile
 Earth, airy and humid, leafy,
 With earth froze, scorch'd? And has the flaccid
 Has one ever seen the fire make a deace
 Nor does your deace turn me from mine.
 Your war does not touch or hurt me,
 Nor a pig of those pigistics.
 Nor are you wine of those old skins
 You are not one of those troops
 And wont to be a spark for others.
 Wooden in its woe
 Of the foe as it wanders
 I undertake unto the east
 The quarrel or the battle
 No, Ordoño, not with you
 Ordoño: His demon friend.
 And who the other?
 Ordoño: It is Rodrigo.
 Who is that one?
 Ordoño: One for another.
 'Tis all the same . . .
 That you awaken and remember.

Of the knight without legs I would like to know so much more than what is known (and it seems it was a great deal) that it is no small point. Your people must know somewhat more than I. At the least they will be informed of his loves with the convert nun Doña Antonia or the Marien, as she was called in her time, the daughter of Abbot Joao of Montemayor. Years ago they told what I know. They told me the story very drily one winter's day, just before dawn, and I do not remember it very well. There are days when I think I invented it myself or I dreamt it.

This is it, if in the meanwhile I have not confused it with others, since these days so many stories, each one similar to the next, are invented daily that one now gets lost between laughter and conjecture and the wit must needs have recourse to spectacles in order to separate facts from their reflections and the lie from its lying shadow, which at times appears truer than the truth. Short-cuts to sainthood are like this. People believe that by telling stories, as the Muslims and Hindus do, saintliness and sapience can be learned and laid out. I have already spoken to you of these short-cuts, which I intrepidly fight. I have also spoken to you of the thou with which thy people contaminate me and which I flee because I believe it a dangerous short-cut to to the marriage of souls, and they say that in such and such a convent in Coruña they teach one to be holy in a week via short-cuts and donations. And these short-cuts are made of mirrors and polished and prevaricatory glass, and they seem to take away any trust in what one sees and make one want to go into cold and dark cells and they say that this is supposed to be holiness, but those who say this lie. But returning to the poor Don Acacio, the man without

Ordño: That you come back to thee.
 Rodrig: What will you of me, then?
 Ordño: I am and **was** wherefore.
 Rodrig: I did baptize you; so what?
 Of your tears . . .
 Though baptismal,
 And painful shedding,
 The token of God's love
 With your own blood
 And prize, you paid
 Just fury's price
 You, noble as you steal
 As you see me shake,
 Could have slayed?
 Whom you in the fight inclement
 The Indian **ferocious**
 Have you now soon forgotten
 Tell me now, my father,
 Of the sea, and you **the** ardor,
 Immanent and azure,
 And **the** dawn baptismal
 Of the immortal water,
 From those founts
 And the baptist,
 Tell me, you **who** are my father,
 Rodrig: I pay attention.
 Ordño: It is a song . . .
 Is not a **gift** . . .
 Rodrig: Pasakawada apprehension.
 I will give you reason, Father, friend.
 For your wherefore

leg**S**, and to his loves with Marien, the convert nun, I have been told that two stories which deny and refute **ea**ch other have spread, from which I have sought **o**ne in between, as the Muslims and thou (you) often like to do.

That is the story and I believe neither in it nor in its moral, but it makes me laugh.

And it seems that Don Acacio lost his first legs fighting Moors who were **d**own by Leila, so in himself and blind with haughtiness that losing his legs was little **O**r nothing, and he was left by all for dead.

He lost both legs, which some say fell off by themselves, like ripe **f**ruit, and others that one of the Moorish foot-soldiers who used to fight with two swords or scimitars sliced them off. The poor Don Acacio did not bleed nor did he show sign of despondency or pain, but he did what they do in his country, and he got on his hands and assailed the Moor, striking him with his stumps and leaving him badly off, and **t**hen he climbed up on his mount upside down and spurring him on in this wise to quicken him he returned to his own camp where all could see with incredulous eyes that he was growing new legs and that in less **th**an a week he had full-grown ones, but they were shapely and without hair, like **e**a woman's, and they aroused interest and even admiration and soon they came from afar to see them, which Don Acacio deigned to show and exhibit until he felt loathing and shame and refused to suffer them be seen but it was already too late.

The knight with the woman's legs sought in vain on the field of honor the Moor who had **C**ut them off, hoping he would cut them off again to see if he could get his own legs back, forgetting that no miracles are repeated. Seeing the uselessness and vanity of his undertaking, and **h**aving listened to the the counsel and entreaties of his

Rodrigo: Wherfore, brethren,
Thou speakest of thee and not of *me*!
And a weaver diligent
Larva of a pain unsounding
Raise, soliciting and silent,
subtle and solicitous
Of apathy destroyer,
Of earthly points of honor,
Of verity sufficient,
Impatience, of the fear
Of thy haste, of thy ardent
A prisoner am I . . .
And do not go!
Hail, O valiant monk,
To pray for you!
You go?
Rodrigo: Not yours, Godspeed!
Rodrigo: What God?
Rodrigo: O, God!
Rodrigo: Nine Dignities . . .
Another time!
Rodrigo: Three times *three* . . .
Rodrigo: Three is one and one is three.
Rodrigo: You think that God is three?
Rodrigo: Why but one God and why not two?
Rodrigo: Why three and why not ten?
Rodrigo: Jehovah, Elohim, and God.
Rodrigo: Thunder?

men, which were that he should accept his legs as a gift of Providence and that he should not hide them in breeches but rather in a red skirt, he soon dressed in this guise for battle, causing spasma among the men of the enemy. But they say that he soon found a fitting contender and this was a woman dressed as a man and she was the nun Marien, feared and detested by the Christians.

They met in combat and shouted *p*oems of battle and challenges to each other and in this guise they took to each other and one day during a battle and between cries and great war songs they were *t*aken with each other they went down to a ford and lay together and knew each other evilly even as they fought, in such wise that it could not be known if they were striking each other or exchanging caresses, and it had to be both because soon the nun became pregnant and brought *i*nto the world a boy and she rushed into battle giving him suck without leaving off intrepidly attacking the Christians, seeking it seems her *l*over with the legs of a woman, until one day she *m*et him and flung her son at him with such force that striking him in the head it left him dull and *w*ithout memory and like to mad, so that seeing his son half-dead he thought to cut off *h*is own legs and give him suck with their blood but it was *u*seless, for the child died. Seeing this the poor Don Acacio took both legs and mad with pain and spasma as he was, he *h*urled them, one in one direction as far as Catalonia, and the other in the *o*ther, which fell in Extremadura. And her*d*ers accompanying sheep on foot started going back and forth between these *t*wo extremes.

Oydño: Palatial love.
 Rodrigo: A throne?
 Oydño: A bird divine . . .
 Rodrigo: Trine?
 The God of thunder and trine!
 You told me your faith in but One God,
 Not indig'n, but Indian. And you!
 Rodrigo: What! Now indign' indignant?
 Oydño: . . . Who is Trine.
 Rodrigo: Who is but One . . .
 Oydño: Three-stringed lute . . .
 He . . .
 And by the piecy He granted,
 That it is by my faith, for love
 May Allah be my witness,
 Rodrigo: O Father, friend!
 Oydño: Of me!
 Rodrigo: I could say the same
 And to see you, unrepentant.
 To see the devil right triumphant.
 Oydño: To see you convert,
 Rodrigo: You are in pain.
 Caravellas.
 And worth three navigating
 Well worth three dead,
 Three walkers sleeping,
 The watches kept, the yards all candles,
 Three death's-heads, and the sails,

Absent friend. Here is what you have been asking of me. It treats of stars and of veils. I possess the Arabic manuscript. If it be of any use to you, here it is.

Ptolemy says in the *Tetrabiblon* that the music of the stars imitates but does not repeat the music of the spheres. The music of the spheres, abstract music, is the resonance of the eternal world, the world which has not yet come to be. The music of the stars is the sound of the winds of heaven, and being the fruit of the harmony of the Cosmos, enchants and elevates, but being an event, an articulation of accidents, aspires to perfection but dissonates.

Boethius in his *De institutione musica* retorts that the geometry of music is nothing more than the skeleton of the time of the universe and as a consequence can break, like a femur or a rib. But this time being predetermined, it must have always existed in the mind of God, and thus also in it music and its accidents. To construe it anew implies obliging God to remember. Supposing God does remember, since he knows everything, that *memoria artificialis* which we call the music of the spheres will needs disturb him like a prosthesis. Salinas claims that a memory cannot be a memory of a memory, but I believe the face of a friend already dead which suddenly presents itself to us in a dream does not dull the memory of the friend *but* rather strengthens it.

I also think that the canticle of the *stars* can only be music if each star is considered a note. The treatise on astronomical geometry of Father Antonio Cerdá explains it thusly. If we trace staffs of five parallel lines in *many* directions and have them

Three caravells are worth
Now if I understand, Rodrigo:

Doth wash the sides,

and calumnious caravells

final which of lunatic

Powdered, and the rancor

Leased for angure

Of death's-heads

(The crumple chalk)

The piece the wipes away the laugh

Free of scent, delighting

And three times nothing.

Is my nought, not much

Waked. Almost nothing

Tiring, than the walk just

Nought more than the most tired

Division. But my nought is nought.

The Indian: the suspected

Of the New World, indig-

Of the three ships, one and true

Was annihilating nought

Of mortals, not the wabada, the valiant

The father of the troubled fate

But not the divided nought

Nought, Father Ordoño, but nought.

Of Judases of yesterday?

What availeth you your herd

From this your present weal?

Wherefore become a justice now

Changes faith and land and color!

And virile war chants sing, now virile

And cry, Land ho!

intersect *o*ther staffs, each one comp*o*sed of five lines drawn in many directions, har*m*onies most sweet will appear before us at *e*ach intersection. If we line them up in succession, we will have an infinitude of melodies seemingly diverse. But harmoniously united.

of infants and Christic praise,
 multiplied the fear
 renewed, and by a thousand
 unceasing, endlessly
 of the new world the sound,
 Who from a mast on high
 Whom I myself did bless,
 Heretic, an al-jami—a Moor!
 That I have spoken with a traitor!
 Of Alstann the servant.
 Mustapha Ibn Arabi
 . . . Ali
 Rodrigo of Triana!
 Bifurcate matter.
 Formula with which is grasped
 Of God, best show the contrite
 Incalculable sloth
 Conforming to the admirable
 Nor that the four predicabilia,
 Brings goodness or brings beauty
 No, no, it is not sure that Bonitas
 Of emerging multitudes.
 Of nought, dissipate
 Conform the powerlessness
 Of the Nine Dignities
 Which through the mouth of spirit Breath
 By nature, not mere attitudes
 . . . Virtues
 Rodrigo:
 I do not understand you.
 Rodrigo:
 Said to be four, they are a hundred . . .
 Those elements four . . .

Oh, my friend, this time I will treat of the ay. In order to do so, allow me recourse to your language. The art of rhymed prose does not fare well in my castle. It has palled and agonizes, tho' still lives. May I live for it and then it will guide you, mournful and secret, through the wood wherein resides the art of measuring and scanning ays. You already know that Saint Isidore knows and recommends it in his Etymologies. The art of measuring and scanning pain and calculating the length of groans was used by the ancient Spartans to choose the victor in the jousts of torture which preceded the rite of the black soup. He who resisted pain the longest was crowned king and then when he was surprised in the act of stealing he was not punished. It is not known at what point the art of resisting pain turned into the art of proclaiming it. But those who were capable of measuring it were always honored and respected and they were called woodsmen or grandfathers. They ate only eggs and honey. In order to measure ays, they used threads of the finest silk which they carried from wood to wood tied to the green crozier which distinguished them . . .

I tell you this so that you understand my interest in taking part in the torture to which Catalina Vazques, the trickster nun, was recently put. The poor woman claimed that the Holy Trinity appeared to her every day at the hour of the siesta. She described it in the following manner: she saw a man, older and with a beard, looking at himself in a mirror. The reflection which the mirror showed was that of a most handsome and sweet youth, and a very white light lit them both. Then she said that the older one was God the Father, His reflection was Christ Our Lord, and

What could time, may God forgive our lapse & expect of time if it is betrayed by fate's vicious stude
As a snake springs from the flower
who tries to pick it
The hand of fate
Makes us happy, but only
to deceive

FROM THREE SAILS, A CRY ASIDE
A Morisco comedy in three acts

ACT I

Scene I

The house of Rodrigo of Triana. Enter Rodrigo, dressed as a Morisco and Ordoño, a Brother of the Order of Our Lady of Mercy.

Rodrigo: Say . . .

Ordoño: What you will show me . . . does it delight?

Rodrigo: It makes delight, all stiff and straight.

Ordoño: Driving?

Rodrigo: Singing . . .

Ordoño: Responding, pondering

From beneath the grave? And now detect

Diffuses prose unfounded

(Prison of the profound and stormy

Tempest of turbid glosses?

Rodrigo: Shiver, shiver like the river

Into the sea of those our lives

Which are byle and sleeping

Stiffly confounding

Gained with lost

And rush toward a cautious

Death, a curse all swelled

With cries and groans,

And once corresponded . . .

Ordoño: By virtues catholic

the light was the Holy Ghost. The inquisitors saw nothing to be condemned in this delicious allegory except for the detail of God the *Father* seen from the back. The nun must have realized the disapproval that the image engendered and tried to correct it. And this was her downfall. For she declared that God the Father and His Son were kissing through the mirror and this slightest of allusions to the abominable sin greatly troubled the inquisitors. And they ordered that she be put to the torture. The nun tried to save herself by concocting that the mirror was the Virgin Mary, adding to the abominable sin the suspicion of incest. Then she imagined that the mirror was in the shape of a heart and that the image represented the Immaculate Conception which had taken place in the heart of the Virgin Mary thanks to a puff of breath which God the Father passed to the Son in the kiss contrary to nature. This was much worse, for it added the suspicion of Judaism. She tried to explain that the Son engendered the Father and the Father the Son simultaneously, which was even worse. The torture drove her mad, which put me in some difficulty, because as you know, I am often consulted regarding the depth and dimension of the most diverse ays of pain in the world. In the end, the poor trickster mixed her ays in such a way that the counter of cries must have gotten confused and allowed the limit of three hundred ays prescribed by Father Eimerich as the maximum daily torture to be exceeded, and the poor thing began to rave. I will not repeat what she said, for that is not the point of my rizala, but rather to communicate my discoveries about the cadence of cries. Seeing the torture of Catalina Vazques it became most obvious to me that there are ays which tend toward *a* and others which tend toward *y*. I have composed the following contradiction:

$$a = ay$$

Ibn-Siriyab. I am sending you a poem for several voices composed by
 In such wise that now, there is nothing new.
 now he is growing old just like everyone else.
 It seems that the shame interrupted his rejuvenation and that
 And so saying he confounded the old Omar.
 proclaimed, It is not new to say there is nothing new.
 Without finching the inventor looked him up and down and
 new.
 The old man interrupted him immediately, saying, This man
 whom you think you have invented is me. Only Allah creates
 from nothing. Then he repeated once again, There is nothing

If we replace the a of the second half of the equation, we get

$$a = (ay)y.$$

If we again replace the a , we get

$$a = [(ay)y]y,$$

that is, an a that fades and a **y** that goes on to infinity.

If on the other hand we take the exclamation $Ay!$ and decide

$$y = ay,$$

whence

$$y = a(ay),$$

thence

$$y = a[a(ay)],$$

that is, a y that fades and an **a** that goes on to infinity.

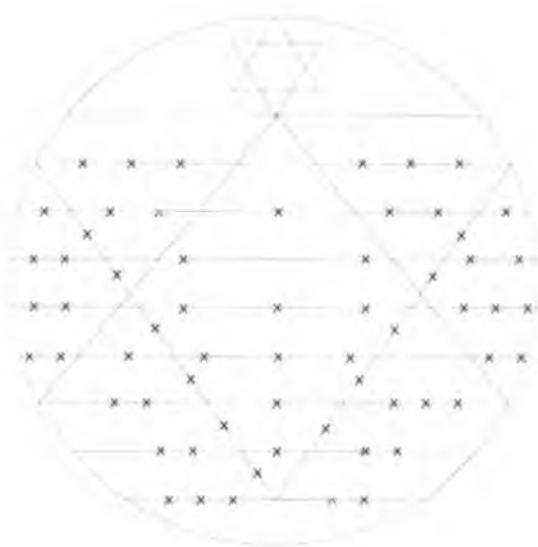
And so it is that with these kinds of cabals and cavils we kill time and await death.

Of the younger Ziryab or Ibn Ziryab (that son of) only the hate and antipathy which encloses and protects him and piously veils the truth from him has reached me. Ibn Ziryab invented everything and invented nothing. He arrived at a palace and had barely moved a cushion when he would proclaim, 'This salon was dead and now it lives. Semi-darkness reigned and now all is splendor. And since he said this believing it himself, others believed him without difficulty. Ibn-Ziryab the inventor invented and created from nothing, in this wise, all of music, the art of walking, the art of looking at stars, astronomy, surgery and algebra. He predicted the invention of death without pain and codified incisions. He invented the tale for several voices. He wrote poems in which animals and men dialogued. His enemies sought his downfall and brought him to Omar Ibn Said, the Old Man. They called him that because he was born old and over the years he was growing younger, albeit not smoothly and slowly, as do those who grow old, but in leaps and bounds and amidst great pain. The old man is not a happy man, even though splendid days of youth and childhood await him before Allah calls him, when he has become a newborn again (but only the sapient, the Just One, knows when that day will be, He and no one else). Omar the Old is convinced that there is nothing new. He often says, 'When I was old, what you are showing me as a novelty already existed. Then he invariably repeats, 'There is nothing new.

The inventor came to the house of a rich merchant, who expected a great contest and with it the definitive destruction of the bedouin inventor. On his arrival Ibn-Ziryab said, 'Yesterday I invented a story which no one has ever invented before: it is about a man who is born old and over the years becomes young.

You already know that Trajana, that prostitute with the eyes of changing color, lent *he*rself as a model for the Annunciation which Ferrantes painted two years ago. No one could believe it. It is said that Ferrantes worked unawares of this, but I do not believe it. What is certain is that on the day after he finished his painting, Trajana *w*ent out into the street proclaiming in a loud voice that she had become a virgin. She was examined by the midwife Maria Mercader, who testified to this before Bishop Nunes. Then Trajana went to Father Hortensio Fugger to confess herself and she seems to have forgotten all her sins. She says she searches and *se*arches in her memory and remembers only gardens of white lilies. The case was sent to the Holy Office which chose not to make any decision, which created stupor. Proofs and counterproofs in the matter were sent to Madrid. But in the meanwhile Trajana *di*sappeared. They found her in Madrid. Diego de Velazquez took her on as a model to represent Spain in his Allegory of the Expulsion of the Moors. There Trajana can be seen dressed as a Roman matron. Then she began to swell great and within a few *w*eek*s* her embarrassment became obvious. Thirty-three days later she brought into the world a Morisco with curly locks and all *hi*s teeth. They say that when he smiles music is heard. He was seen by the Holy Office and the case was hidden from the people for fear that they speak of a *n*cw prophet. But the case is not unusual nor is there any miracle here: this Trajana in the meantime as she posed had begun to cry, as the conceit required and as Rippa says she should. She must have swallowed some tears which stuck to her womb and germinated as often

And the yellow in its center is like sesame seeds clustered on a plate
Its redness not different from the red of twilight
Its whiteness is like the brilliance of the stars
The beauty of the rose
He reached the rose in a crowd of deep red and pink roses



head in its maw. Arriving as he did at the river Guadalquivir at a place of calm waters he put it down so it could take root there. And the head flowered.

Very quickly there grew up a tree and in the crown was the head hidden among red and white flowers. And each time that a walker plucked a flower, the sound of a flute was heard and if several flowers were plucked the tree sounded a melody. And in autumn when the leaves fell, lute music was heard and the head began to sing. With its eyes closed the head of the handsome Don Sancho sang stories. And these stories were the destiny and future of those who happened by. They came from afar to hear them. Seeing this Our Lord ordered them to cut off the head and he sent it to his son Ibn Hussein, but the latter, seeing the wonder, fell in love with the head. And he would not part from the tree. Seeing this Our Lord ordered that his son be decapitated and his head hung from the selfsame tree as an example. Thereupon he sent it to his son Mustapha the Holy, the Good, the fit, the Ever-happy. But seeing the head, Mustapha fell in love and became sad and tearful and had eyes only for the head. And once again the King Our Lord ordered them to cut off his head, and sent it to his third son Mahmud the Dull, the impassive one, the lover of rats. But seeing the head, Mahmud began chanting its praises and became silly and of good appetite. The king cut off his head and sent it to the rest of his sons one by one. And all of them were decapitated. Other walkers lost their heads in the same way and soon the tree could no longer be seen hidden behind the mountain of heads. Seeing this the king ordered that the prayer be recited from the tower of heads. Allah took pity and let fall a thunderbolt on the Alahay, this watchtower of the decapitated. Allah is clement.

happens. This Morisco is the son of a tear and a painting^g, as is known to have happened in Byzantium and in Ireland . . .

Then they expelled him to Tunis and his mother became a nun.

Diego de Pineles has returned from Naples and told of the following event, which I pass on to you. A very good friend of his, a painter of still-lif^fes called Andrea da Buti, took him to see a Morisco painter whom they call Sigismund the African. The poor man has gone blind and paints by ciphers and singing. Intervals represent distances and with chr^omaticisms he indicates the color. The subtleties he conveys with flourishes. If he is singing in the hypermyxo-Lydian mode, ω is the proslambanomenos, ϕ the hypatchypaton, and γ the parhypatchypaton; then the interval between the proslambanomenos ω and the hypatchypaton ϕ should be one tone, which means that the apprentices are to draw a curve whose radius, if the circumference were to be completed, would be seven inches. The beginning and the end of each line ^ar^e marked by silences and the passage from one figure to another by a change of mode. The painting represented eigh^ht figures, each of which embodies one mode. There the painter had dictated the face of his friend, but the latter did not recognize himself; on the other hand Pinelos, whom the African had ne^ever seen, discovered himself kissing Spring on the breast. Some facts are inexplicable.

The child who lost his head at the very moment that his father was decapitated.

And as Ordoño and his knights were besieging the fort of Badajoz, they went from besiegers to besieged. And Ordoño said to his men that whoever wished to stay should stay as long as they were no more than twelve. And that the rest should leave and bring the news of their sacrifice to Toledo. But among the first who volunteered to stay was his son. Ordoño took him aside and ordered him to leave. Since he refused to do this, Ordoño wounded him in the belly and in one leg and thus wounded he had no other choice but to leave. Ordoño deployed his soldiers in a half-moon and one of them having pointed out the unusual and curious nature of the figure, the accused reconsidered and formed the cross of Isa and in this way our forces defeated them more easily and almost in one breath. At the moment that Ordoño was decapitated, his younger son Sanchez, the headless the bewitched (Allah confound him), was hiding in Toledo. At the exact moment at which his father was decapitated, his head came off and fell to the floor where the hounds were cowering. One of them grabbed the head in his maw and ran off into the courtyard, followed by Ordoño's kinsmen and servants. They could not find him. Whereupon his kinsmen decided that the body should be buried without a head and offered a great reward to whoever could offer any news of it or of the dog, who may have devoured it, in which case they should immediately kill it and bury it in guise of the head, between the shoulders of Don Sancho. But the dog walked and ran for days and nights with the

A few months ago, in the theatre company of Prado de la Rosa, there appeared a strapping young lad who said he was a gittern and viola player, a graceful dancer, and a singer and acrobat and who declared that he had learned his skills from some Italian comic actors. He affirmed his name to be Villas or Villegas, and the comics, seeing his many abilities and aptitudes, charged him with various parts in the comedies of their Theatre. He showed proof of discretion and came to be loved by all and hated by only one. His enemy, a Portuguese, one-eyed and ill-featured, sought only spite, warring upon him day and night, but the good Villas took little note of his many affronts and offenses and even seemed thankful to him for the sneers, rancors, jabs and kicks with which he used to welcome him at the start of each performance. This Lusitanian, seeing that he gained *nothing* by attacking him, feigned to change his attitude and feigned to be his friend and protector. He stuck to him like a shadow and at times even passed the night with him. It was thus that he discovered that Villas never slept and was always fresh and well-disposed. He notified a curate *who* was a good friend of his and a distant relative and between them they kept watch on him.

They saw one day that the youth took leave of all the others and went outdoors and was lost in a wood. They followed him and discovered that he was wont to hide in a cave. They followed him and suprised him serenading a sleeper. They found nothing worthy of surprise, stupor or scandal except his voice, which seemed to be coming from the viola. In the middle of the song, the

the convict and her stones were stolen. where she touched down to earth. The married woman entered raining and greening fields as far as the Kingdom of Navarre, into the sky. She was hidden by a cloud and went away with it, doctors classified the stones while the married woman rose up somnolent protected by her smile. Having nothing else to do, the

Someone told me that the stones had become precious but that it was not easy to classify them for they changed color and nature and it appears that they reflected each other very deeply as they say happens with the souls of saints in Paradise. And the insults had been erased and in their stead newer words made up sayings of great wisdom and understanding and that these were they a true book of nature. It appears that a few people copied them but many were lost. The next time I will send you a few.

sleeper seemed to awaken and thereupon was sp^asmas and scandal, for at the very moment the sleeper opened his eyes, the singer vanished into thin air, leaving behind him something like a cloud or vinegary mist. When questioned, the one who had been sleeping declared that he had been asleep for many months and remembered dreaming of someone singing, and it turned out to be this Villas. He remembered scenes from the comedies which Prado de la Rosa were wont to present, and was able to recognize the Portuguese with no pain or effort. Then he declared he was hungry, de^voured a sausage they gave him and drank with great thirst. Then with his hunger sated and half-drunk he fell asleep again.

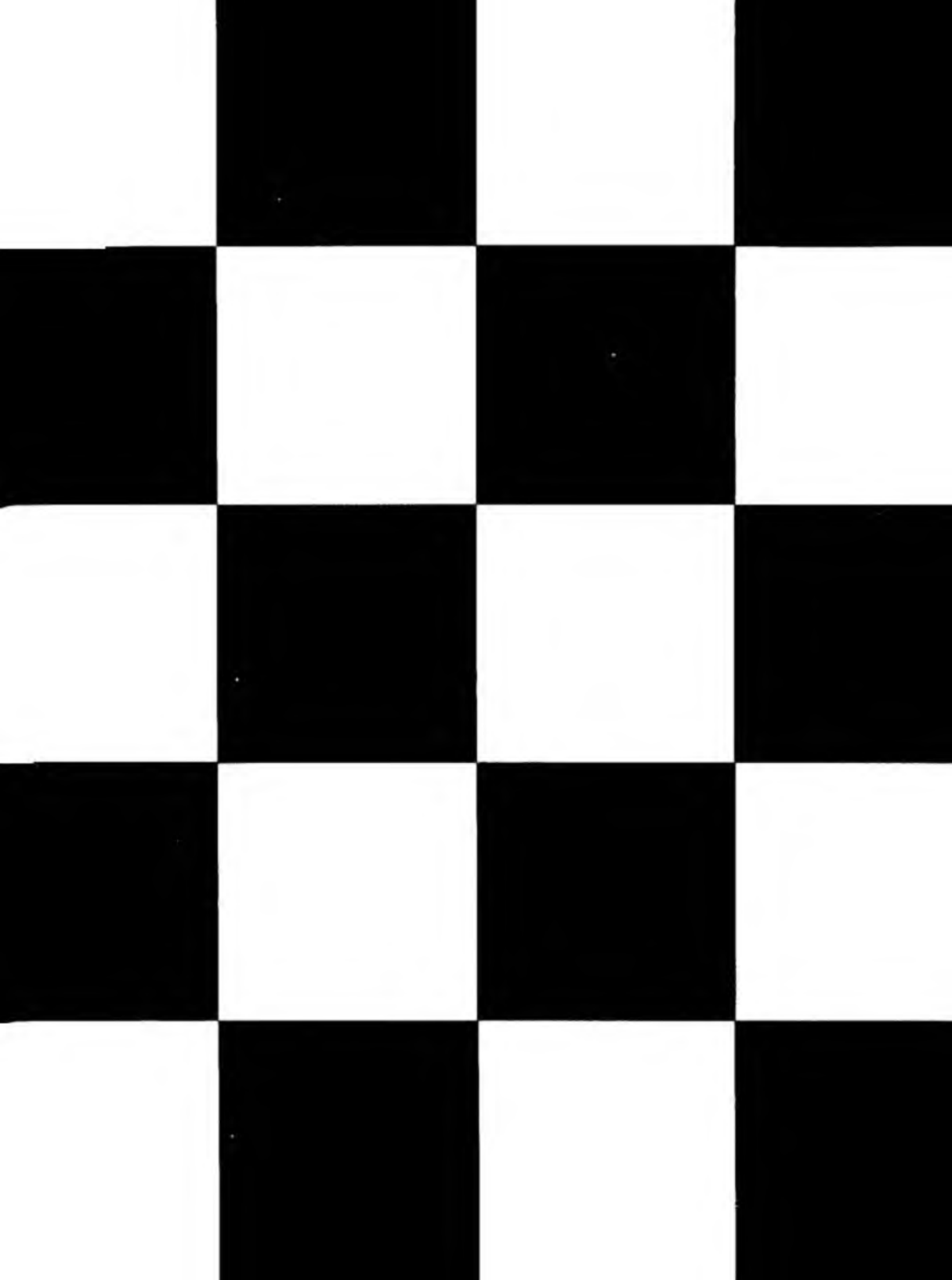
That very night the young Villas reappeared at the theatre and sang and danced in a com^edy of Lope de Vega. Seeing this, the Portuguese and his cousin the curate left during the performance and went to the cave and woke the sleeper, thus hoping to make Villas dis^apppear from the stage in the presence of all, but it did not happen thusly but instead he sang with fuller voice and danced with great grace and charm to the stupor of the ladies.

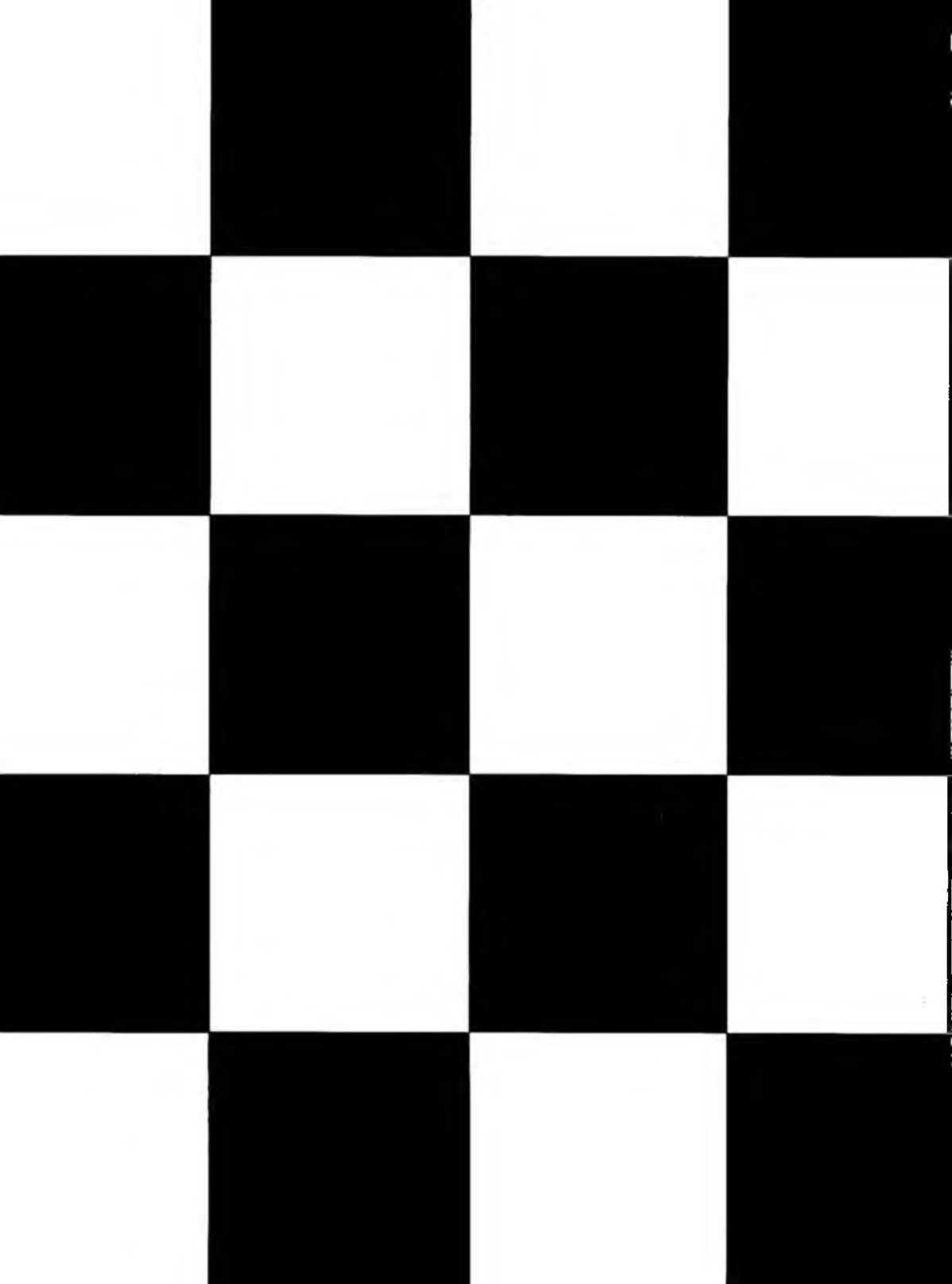
The Portuguese and the curate nonetheless did not renounce seeking faults and defects in their enemy and followed him day and nig^ht. They discovered that at times when they lost sight of him he would lock himself in a cellar situated beneath a tavern where the actors were wont to eat and drink. They were able to follow him and surprise him as he was singing to another sleeper. The latter awoke and this Villas again vanished into thin air. This second sleeper declared he had dreamt of the musician and was capable of singing couplets and reciting verses from the comedies.

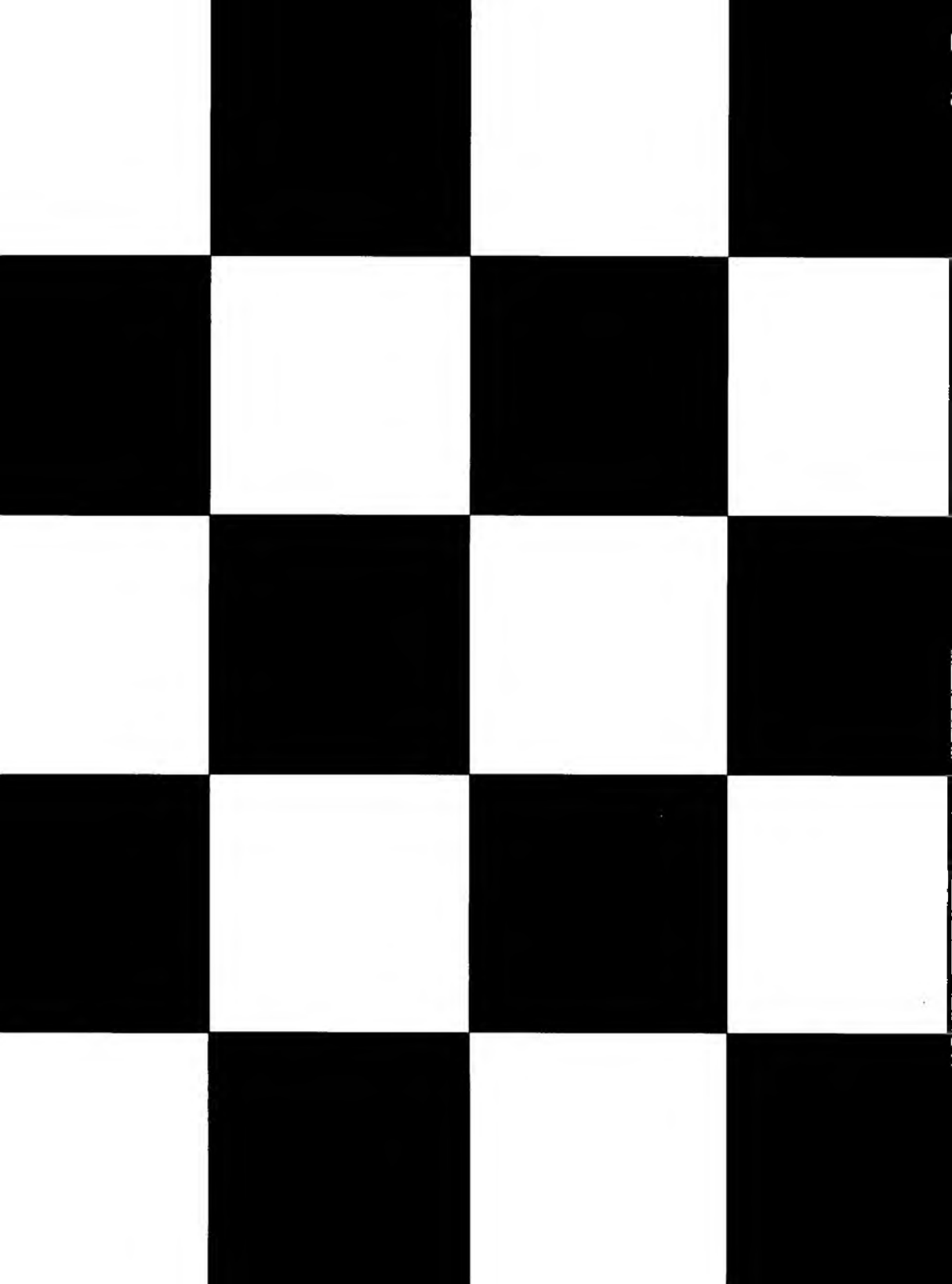
The young man r^ecappeared on the following day. They began following him again and this time they surprised him singing to a

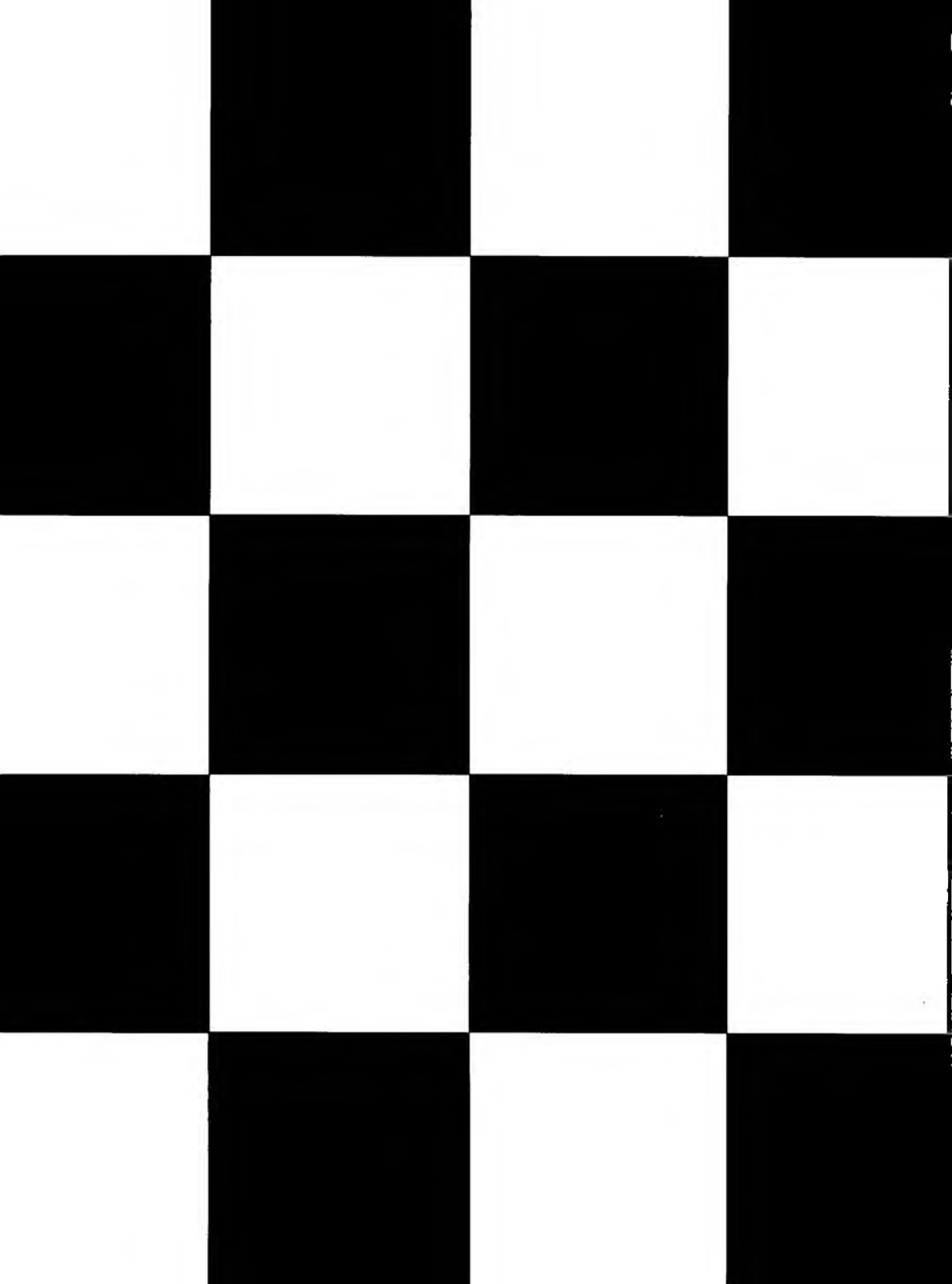
In the ocean of night as the last of the flood-tide was ebbing, an eclipse snatched away half the moon. It became like a minor heaven/blacksmith with the red of the fire fading into the black

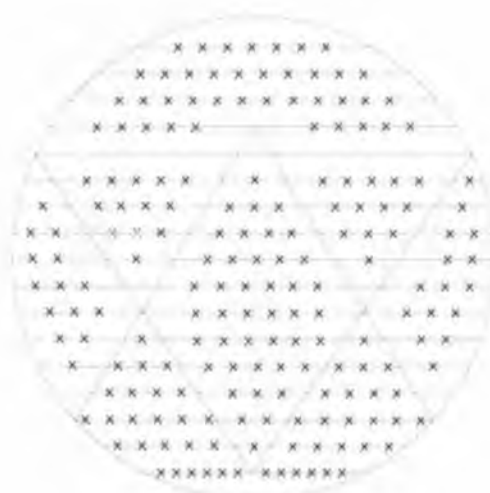












The Jew with the promised lapidary of the bay horse is on his way. This is a copy of Rabbi Halevi's and his a copy of the mute lapidary of Villena, which owes much to the writings of your Alonse the Wise.

Here it says that the stones of the lapidary of the bay horse are commented upon in the order in which they turned about the Virgin Mary, and this deserves an explanation, which is the one I wish to submit, show and render to you, one I think belongs more to you than to me.

And the Andalusians of Tunis relate that those stones were thrown in Horrichuelas at an infidel woman. The stone-throwers from Horrichuelas came from Morocco, where they stone from a distance. They used to put the victim's hands and feet attached, half-buried on the summit of a mountain. Then they dispersed, employing themselves several leagues away with stones on which they wrote insults. The infidel, a married woman, had sinned with a curate whose throat was cut at the very moment at which they were surprised in the act. The infidel had succumbed to the heat given off by carasses which the curate was giving to a chair in her house, carasses which were sapient and subtle, almost painful, obstinately vicious and so long that you could measure time with them and the hours became centuries. They set the married woman on top of a mountain. They cast stones at her with one voice. But they say the married woman was a devotee of the Virgin Mary. They then explain thusly that instead of striking her, the stones began to turn about her and, polished by the blessed breeze which held them aloft, became precious stones of rare and calming color. Some lapidologists came to see her and when they arrived the married woman was levitating, now collected and

sleeping widow whom they had given up for lost and who was already half-dead. He awakened her with his song. Again he vanished into thin air. The situation repeated itself no fewer than twenty times. The curate notified the Holy Office and they had him interrogated without finding anything with which they could reproach him, so great was the talent he showed, and he alleged and proved he was a native of Alcala de Henares and that he was a good son and he thought one day he would enter the convent and it could not be proved that he did not sleep. At the same time the curate and the Portuguese were put to the torture whereupon they lost their desire to follow their purpose, which was to lose that Villegas.

It is said that at the end of that year there arrived one day people come from diverse parts of Spain and Italy who attended the performance in the outdoor theatre of Rosas and fell asleep before the end of the second act. Thereupon Villas sang and danced, and they came to, but the young man did not vanish into thin air as one might expect, but rather, mouthing cries he began to yawn, to the great scandal of the public, and then he fell asleep and all the sleepers, who were three hundred sixty-six in number, like a leap year, vanished into thin air. And the young Villegas still sleeps and it is believed that he will never again awaken.

He is very ill and will surely die in the coming week.

And saying this he tried to put out the other's eyes, but a guard prevented him.
 The Mahdi let out a cackle.
 —It is certain that even in the lips of a poor man, a saint, or a pure man, sedition can reside.
 And then, looking at his knights, he said, There is nothing more dangerous than the words of a poor man. His seduction hides sedition.
 And with his own hands he cut off the head of the Fakir.

The stones of the married woman which reflect each other remind me of a treatise on physics of Moses Cardoso in which he claims that nature is composed of atoms which are like precious stones and which diligently copy each other changing their nature and engendering ideas for beings which hylé copies, and these atoms seem to him a better explanation than that of the Scfiroth, which may be so, but then Origen said the dignities of God are variable in number and not fixed, as Raymond Llul (who believes they are ten) would have it, and this is so because they are all contained in each one and they expand at divine instance and the monk Johann of Tübingen believes that they are not like ideas but exemplary facts and that they serve as models for worldly facts and that these are of two types, fecund and infecund. You see that the dispute drags on.

It is said: there are large eyes and small eyes. It is said: everything is smaller than the eye that looks, an eye that can suffer a castle, a city enter through it.

But if an eye looks at another eye, it devours and is devoured. It digests and is digested, it vomits and is vomited.

Within an eye there is no room for another eye. Thus he spake, devouring him with his eyes. Then Ibn Mumiid looked fixedly upon the Mahdi. He fixed his gaze in the center of that sky, the black eye of that one-eyed man of the desert.

The Fakir heard and said nothing. At the same time he fixed his gaze on the Mahdi. He first considered his right eye. He concentrated his attention on the center of that sky. There he fixed on the point around which all the stars of that universe must needs turn. Then he looked at the left eye. He again concentrated his attention on the center of that new universe and in this wise ordered the stars, planets, and stones. The fires and the chant.

Then he looked at his eye situated between those two worlds already concentrated and disunited. He submitted them to the center of his one and only eye.

The Mahdi looked around him. Everything seemed new to him.

—What you see you are seeing without your eyes. All you see is eyes. These eyes are looking at you. This palm tree is an eye; this desert is but one enormous white eye. Those people are eyes and eyes, eyes. You are now seeing with all these eyes. And now you will not need your own. Be blind.

Relics

Villalón in his Peregrinations tells us that a tailor from the Jewish quarter in Rome told him the following story.

. . . And it having been decided that the relics would be provisionally deposited in the central wing (of the Escorial) where the library was to be, a madman got in and having hid in some scaffolding he spent the night there and at dawn he managed to slip away without anyone noticing him and he carried off all the relics in a sack. And His Majesty having ordained that he be sought and found in any wise possible they beat about, with twelve hundred soldiers of the garrison taking part and all the friars and many women and they took dogs to scent out the relics and it was ordained that forty-three water-bearers would make their way from the convent chapel with two barrels of altar wine and twenty-seven of holy water and that all this was transported on every part with the water-bearers deployed in a circle and sprinkling the holy water in all directions and thus watering the earth in the hope of thus helping the said relics to be found promptly. And they found them after two days of seeking, and the relics, stowed tight and close in the sack, had served the madman as a pillow and as a consequence his head shone like a sun, and His Majesty ordained that he be sprinkled with holy water and in this wise his head was extinguished and he recovered his reason and they say he entered the convent of the Benedictines where he is doing penance.

winter's morning not far from Seville. A peasant woman found it there and discovering its roughness she used it as a depilatory. It circulated from hand to hand, crasing the lifelines of all the women. Then the wind carried it off. I know that many things happened, but I have forgotten them.

But you, my friend, would like to know what I think and opine of the use of the veil. I know that the Christians prize it and hold it up as an example. Paul the Apostle recommends it. Tertullian exalts it.

But it is not certain.

There is only one veil, the blue veil which effaces lips and nostrils. Of it I will tell you on another occasion.

But after a time another madman once again stole the relics, and having been seen fleeing through the countryside by a certain cretin by **t**he name of Simon, and whom His Majesty loves and respects, this time was able to be found quite easily, and His Majesty ordained that he be bathed in holy **y** water, but he did not recover his reason. And they say that sometimes the demon is stronger and other times weaker . . .

And in order to avoid further thefts His Majesty ordained that there should be a permanent guard **w**atching over the relics, but it was of little use, for one of the guards, inspired by the demon and crazed from having eaten some blood sausage, opened the caskets in which the relics lay and scattered them on the ground, and laid out in this fashion the relics formed a **h**uman body from which only the male member was missing, and seeing this the guard cut off his own and laid it among the relics and this set the bells of the region to ringing with**o**ut anyone tolling them. And there was stupor and spasma. But not content with this the maddened guard stole into the monastery and very carefully emasculated seven friars while they slept and then went to sleep himself. But while he slept, the several male members, creeping like the snakes, went **u**nto him and penetrated him through the navel and the eye (so as not to sin) and devoured his entrails. And His Majesty having ordained that these penises should be examined closely it was **d**iscovered that each had two rows of twenty-seven little teeth on top and seventy-four beneath, wondrous to see. And as they were being examined and holy **w**ater poured on them, the penises decomposed into caterpillars and then turned into butterflies. This is the truth.

As-Sarisi says, and it must be true, that the story of the blue veil and the cruel Sultan Mulyahid must have happened otherwise and not in Affrick but in Persia, but the substance and savor give it value and permanency. I heard it years ago and I do not know if I will be able to satisfy your desire and tell it to you and frighten you.

It is said, then, that Sultan Mulyahid, who punished by cutting the body in two halves and scattering the brains, the tamer of white ants, the choleric, received the blue veil from the hands of one of his victims. He was already holding it in his hands when the body of the latter had been cut clean and his brains were travelling through the entrails of the falcon. The veil, made of glow-worms, divined as it it were breathing and attracted the winds. The Sultan picked it up and he presented it to one of his wives. To thank him, the poor thing wished to show it off the next day. That night the women of the harem discovered that the veil had erased the mouth of the Sultan's favorite. The Sultan ordered the other women to use it and in each case the veil erased their mouths and nostrils. It soon became known that Mulyahid the cruel possessed a harem of women without mouths. Thirsty to look, famished to hear songs. This mute harem caused talk and the Sultan had to forbid that it be mentioned in books or spoken of.

He killed a great many people. All who spoke ill were executed in the presence of the four hundred women without mouths.

Until the day the veil was carried off on a summer breeze. They saw it fly off into the distance and up to the sky. The astronomers noted it and Hussein ibn Kartabu for a time flew along with it and was afraid. Then it softly fell to earth one

His Majesty being absent, a certain Lucas Cueto was presented to the High Chamberlain. This was an eight-year-old child from whose **n**ostrils bubbles would spew forth at any time. They say that these bubbles do not burst immediately, are orange, somewhat golden, and can be caught in one's hand, and in each of them the king can be seen from the back. And to burst them one must need**d**s have recourse to fire, and then they sigh and draw tears from whosoever listens. And the child is a dolt and does not wish to see the king for fear that he no longer make the bubbles which he calls his eyes. Seeing this all the fools of the palace fell to their knees uttering exclamations and asked to eat and drink. But the child did not wish to eat and says he is afraid he will no longer make bubbles. And he confessed that it is not the king that he wishes to see in his bubbles but his mother, who has been dead for years, a peasant woman named Pareja.

themselves to writing prayers with beads. They say that lately they have killed the vipers and have devoted in the Canary Islands and the fakirs seem to forgotten it, because whistle it but they cannot because the whistled language was kept where the manuscript is venerated. Everyone would like to converted inhabitant of the islands who brought it back to Tunis, forgotten the text. The treatise on surgery was recovered by a which they call the Canaries, have kept the language but have language they know, that of whistles. The natives of these islands, were forced to explain themselves and they did so in the only islands, and there they were hunted with nets. Afterwards they

There arrived with several months' delay the three-legged guinea-hens which they had ordered in Flanders and which come from Thule. Apart from their three legs they caused no amazement at the beginning, but when **t**hey began to cackle everyone made the sign of the cross, for they were clucking noises of battle and in them could clearly be heard the poems of combat the Moors used to shout as they fought. And a Morisco who was **pr**esent and whose name is Pedro Nunes translated them and almost all tell of the same river which is the Guadalquivir. And it seems they announce portents and prodigies which this Pedro Nunes did not wish to translate, but they must be evil for the next day he **ra****n** off to Venice and turned Jew. This is the truth.

A group of fakirs was carried off by the sea breeze to the stout they easily fly and as they fly whistle.

prayer, they attach them to their bodies, and since they are **not** of painful white, and when they finally finish these wings of hands which the Powerful One guides and weaves wings most light these fakirs pray day and night with luminous and impalpable by whistle has reached us . . .

latter practical teachings. Thanks to these, the treatise of surgery points so furtively traced, but on the contrary extract from the vipers and they do not have the time to enter into the terror of the fakirs whistles and memorizes the incessant movement of the the dolphins, hidden between beads and fangs, the alums of whales. In the center of this city, in the middle of this Medina of which deliciously fix the terrible truths of the metropolitan invented a language which expresses itself via warbles and trills The readers of the dance translate it into whistles and have between the very vast walled bones of the whales without end.

these holy men, dance being nothing but the movement of vipers in it live the fakirs, readers of the dance, as the simple folk call that that the city of bones is guarded by whistling vipers and that cemetery of whale-cities not far from the sea. You will also see him and showed the way. This whistle led him to the himself to be carried forward by a lone whistle which went before order to write it he first had to walk in the desert, suffering discourse on surgery by whistling to Abu Hashim and that in (macama). You will find that we owe the first transcript of the come into **Y**our hands when you have burned this missive I have selected for you these sentences and sayings which will From the transcript of the treatise on pious cuts and incisions,

The vomiter of crosses from Cuenca of whom we have already spoken was presented to the court. He is neither tall nor short and vomits some very small crosses which can barely be seen. Today he has vomited four times and they kept him at the palace so that he would vomit for the Ambassador of France, who they say has a servant who vomits flowers. And they wished to hold a tourney between the croser and the floral. And they have been vomiting afresh. His Majesty asked that the vomits be accompanied by music. But the vomiter of crosses makes some very ugly sounds and which are farts. The marvel is that these farts are perfumed, like violets, while on the other hand, the vomiter of flowers, although he makes no noise, exudes excrement, to where even the flowers stink and this was displeasing and the King ordained that he vomit his flowers in the garden.

This very day, while he was vomiting flowers, the man from Cuenca died suddenly. The crosses turned to powder and they say they can be used to make gold. But no one has seen this and I do not believe it.

But the story of Saints Leila and Ashta astounds me . . .
 One, a sinner in her youth and with big eyes, cried when she saw the evil of the world. They say that her crying gathered the clouds and made it rain. They asked for her in towns where there was drought and, not wishing to be the instrument of troubled agreements and petty dealings, she went off to the desert where she settled down to cry, feeding on her own tears.

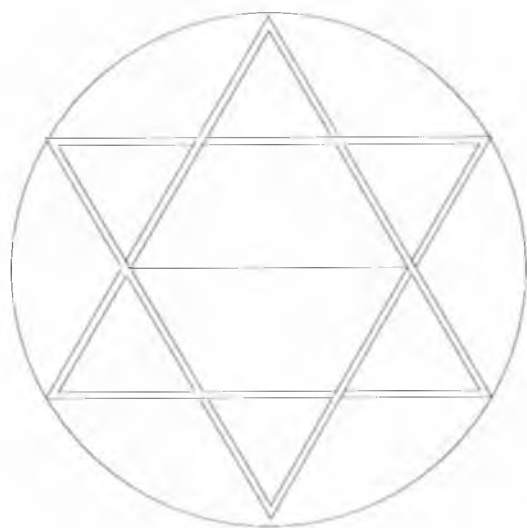
One day, soon after these events, a palm tree that was the pride of the oasis called El Oasis, began to move before the eyes of all. It abandoned El Oasis and went off. It was lost in the desert and it was impossible for the knights who were following it to catch up with it, and even though it moved slowly, it always remained at the same distance from the cavalry in spite of the fact that many times they ran at it from many directions whipping their horses like unto the death.

The palm tree drew nigh to the holy woman and protected her with its shadow. And from its dates, as if from clouds, rained holy rain. Many pilgrims gathered to drink of the water of the tree that rains, but the saint took no note and thought but to give thanks to Allah for his many gifts.

At that time, not far from there, another saint, having fasted many days and nights, became so light that the wind carried her off and subduced her in the air, but she made nought of the miracle but to thank Allah and then set about her praying and peacefully suffered to be carried to where the palm tree was and once there the wind began to blow softly around her, making her turn weightlessly around the other saint. And neither of the two paid any attention to this miracle, but impassively continued meditating and giving thanks to Allah.

They have since died.

No one has made much ado about the starry whales which have floated three day**S** and three nights above the palace, and it was from having heard so much about them that when they appeared they were no longer a novelty. They low like cows and were made up of some st**a**rs which go on and off, and one cannot fix a gaze on them because they blind. You would think they were woven in Flanders. They seem intelligent, but they are only forms and are neither pha**n**tasms nor monsters. These whales are following a royal hare whom no one has been able to catch.



the air the peaceful waves that are a figure of the plenitude of the sea of the soul.

The eye that looks behind the veil. The demon leads certain men to copy the creation of Allah, and thus to abase it by seeking to imitate it. This is a sin. The sinner is easily recognized because his pupils, when examined by the light of a lamp, are slightly rectangular or triangular, depending on the case. For the square, the circle, and the triangle are the elementary figures upon which all vision is based.

Other cases.

Blue eyes. The worst color: hypocrisy.

Bulging eyes: Shameless, lazy, dissolvent.

Elongated eyes: Perverse.

Reddish eyes: Valiant and decided.

He whose eyes are shifty and sharp-looking: a thief and a

traitor.

He whose eyes scan from left to right: a blaspheemer and of

evil sentiments.

He who always looks beyond you to someone we do not see

is already dead. Kissing his hands is dangerous.

Ibn al-Razi

They brought to the palace a man who says he urinates further than anyone. They showed him to the King and the latter asked him for a *d*emonstration. The man asked him to set an object at any distance he liked and His Majesty ordained that a pot be set two leagues distant. And urinating, the man filled it to the half. And one of those present, wishing to make a joke, asked if he was capable of urinating as far as Rome and the man urinated into the air and it seems that recently Their Majesties received a missive from the Ambassador to the Vatican in which he relates *t*hat it rained urine on the Dome of Saint Peter's, causing stupor and spasma. And His Majesty ordained that that man, Soares by name, be forbidden from urinating afar.

I look at the book of your life situated just behind
 your head.
 I smothered you with my eyes and take you prisoner.
 I look at you in order to surprise you.
 I look at you so that you will look at me.

Abu Ubayid

The guilty look: the one that looks at bunderal zones or excrement and stains the eyes—the stain is visible to any good physiognomist. To operate on the stain (cataracts?), the surgeon should wait for the beginning of the new moon. The patient should keep his eyes closed until the full moon. In this way the stains of the 'mirror of faults', will absorb the impurities of the eye.

A furtive glance during the sexual act physically disturbs the child-to-be. Thus Ibn Hazm (in the Neckband of the Dove) recalls the case of the birth of a black child of two white parents; after consulting the physiognomist they found out that the black doll of one of the slaves, left near the door, had entered the too curious mother through her eyes, infecting her progeny.

The eye that reads the world. There exist two types of looking: one which looks and scans the veil of things (sensation) and another that reads and sees only transcendent reality (the eye of perception). But when the saint, able to see only with the eye of perception, looks over the world with his gaze, he does not see the world, but reads it. In this case, the eye scans the landscape from right to left and the pupils rise and fall softly, subtly drawing in

Last Thursday, after having prayed with Their Majesties and having eaten a great deal, the cretin Maria Lopes set to shouting that there were only Moors. As Their Majesties hold her in high esteem and believe everything she says, they asked her the **w**herefore of such a claim and the cretin pointed with her little finger to four soldiers of His Majesty's guard, repeating, Those are disguised and relapsed Moors. His Majesty immediately ordained them to be arrested and put to the torture. But then he countermanded, understanding that there are times when even cretins are inspir**e**d by the demon. And they say that now the cretin goes about shouting that in Spain there are only Moors and she **a**lready has followers. And His Majesty has ordered that the case be examined by the Inquisitor Bartolomé Mal Aguila.

darkly joyous.
 moon shone forth, showing my form, all wickedness, and my soul
 light of the crescent moon, a light which annuls all shadow. That
 in my center, but blessed on my borders. A silver light it was, the
 curse the word), the moon cast its light on me, creating me cursed
 the Pious, the Merciful, pardons). The day of the crucifixion (God
 And I **O**we you witness of the reason for His clemency (for He,
 tongue, speech, and voice (albeit hoarse and full of bitterness).
 unto you, blessed shadows, me, without hope, and gives me a
 Allah (a thousand times blessed) has allowed me to draw nigh
 little mark. I will not even be a sifter, a cipher, a zero. But behold,
 four bricks meet; I will be nothing more, even much less **W**an a
 roads that cross; I will be nothing more than the point at which

(God give him a thousand gifts).
 ass of the future which is to visit Paradise bearing the Prophet
 shadow of the ass of the moon, the shadow of the Blessed, of the
 And then the fifth shadow interjected and said, I am the

God.
 And with one voice the five shadows began chanting praises to
 (With one voice, not many, to one God, not three.)

His Majesty ordained that seven crosses be made from wood brought from Jerusalem. And a boat loaded with such logs ha**v**ing landed in Seville, they took and delivered them to the master-carpenters Pedro Martines and Jacobo Vela and the said carpenters set to work but they had to cease immediately for they had begun to laugh and on b**e**ing interrogated they said that the sawdust from the wood tickled them and brought back memories. And after the crosses were finished His Majesty ordained that a procession be made by night around the convent and all the faithful began **t**o laugh during the procession and they say it was from the wood, which was used to crucify the Evil Thief. And that its sawdust makes one laugh. The King had the crosses burned and the smoke formed an egg in the air from w**h**ich sprouted wings without a body. And they say that they are still laughing in the Escorial, but now much less than before. The King has g**o**ne off, since much laughter gives him the colick.

hunger and which flies inside men and thins the blood and lightens the humors. The shadow of saffron and cummin, a life powdery and sparse but fixed in its center. I am the shadow which makes one salivate. I invite to pandures and keep away sleep and tickle the nostrils.

Thus spake the third shadow: I am the shadow of Christ on the mount which was cast during the sermon in which He spake and taught his doctrine (may God bless Him and bestow gifts on Him). I am the shadow which bit the earth, which gashed its teeth made of eternal nought, of uncreated nought, a rest. The form that Christ (I sa)—blessed be He—suspended in time, and the shadow that causes the plants and perturbed flowers to wax and wane eternally following the figure of His preaching. And that the supple (may God perfume it) and most sweet wind which separated His words is and shall be the music of the dance of the flowers, and that the cat which sought to protect itself from the heat of the sun and sought that shadow there encountered cool and eternity. And the selfsame happened with the ants and the bees which found themselves blessed by sweet shade (the luminous darkness beside which all light is but darkness and blindness). These creatures now come with me and follow me because God (the One, the Adorable) thus ordered and Christ too was able to wish it (may God bestow His gifts on Him).

And the fourth shadow said, I am the black look of torture. I am the wicked figure of the Cross plundered and defiled by the followers of Pope Urban the Frenchman (may God damn him and dry up his tongue and never forgive him and make him burn). I am the shadow of the Cross, borne by that sultan (may he be damned) and that campador the Cid (may burning not suffice). I am ashamed of my figure and my arms. I do not dance. My words are bitter but my soul is with Christ and may Allah protect it. I will be forgotten; I will be nothing more than the image of two

And this has happened recently. On the second Sunday after Pentecost, the Benedictine Father Antonio Soler began railing in the middle of the Mass and on being asked the reason did not wish to say or explain anything and asked for Confession, which was given immediately. And after confessing himself he now seem calmed **but** on the following day he began to utter a cry every four steps he took and they called a doctor who examined him. And it appears that this man, without having any evil thoughts or desires, was ejaculating each time he took more than four **Steps** and this disturbed him and made him cry out.

They gave him compresses and enemas but to no effect. And for the last few weeks he **has** been saying Mass while shouting and wherever he goes he always takes along with him a pot which he fills several times a day with seminal fluid and His Majesty the King has gone to see him and by common agreement they ordained that he be castrated but it has got worse and now he suffers permanent ejaculation. The day before yesterday he was given **Extreme** Extreme Unction. Now he no longer cries out but groans and in groaning makes use of three notes. And His Majesty ord^ained that with these notes the master of the royal chapel Juan de Zárate compose a Te Deum. And so it shall be done.

Bi-smi-Llahi-r-rahmani-r-rahim. The histoire and tale of Abu
Idn al-Qarabuz and al-hadis of Isa (Alayim il salamu!). And the
teller seggeth that Isa, bèond l'al-janna (in Paradise) and seonde
thas Bani Israia saden He nactre was bore~~n~~ or sette for (Allah
taala!) on thas cuntries and landes, and preched al-khutha that thai
shien noht dileste in His seggende and warnunge duyeh wæren
vain & to lahghenn & wannen Isa the C (Sal-lal-ah alayhi was-
salam) kennid and cnawed that this is swa, He bed seche of His
schades duyeh the Israia tolc i-sacret holden be duyekken and
gan furth that all færen & wundren **O** on them more. And
rollede furth thai cam the place neah duharic Mary (Tabarka wa
taala) was weepinde and mornede wel sore and tæherende. And
the schades of the Y-sacret, schakyn away the asch and ponder of
the rode, crebende redibkadas and withth gret umillite preched
al-khutha and thas Bani Israia gadrode manigon and in great
nombre heorden the gæmende wæthen the reiruns of the
duyekken schades.

And what they said.

The first shadow. I am the shadow of the Christ Child, who
spake with the doctors of the law, who said what he already knew
and was to know, a shadow returned and fragrant and sure,
wind-swept and novel, made of laughter and chants. The sun cast
me against the wall of the temple, and there I will have to live until
I am destroyed by the father of my father.
And the second shadow said, I am the shadow of Christ, the
one which stayed and lived at the house where the marriage feast
at Cana was held. I hold in my hands the shadows of a loaf and
and a fish. I am the shadow that comes in through the eyes and
through the mouth. The shadow that is eaten, that feeds
uncessingly and which sends its breath into the bellies of the
righteous who fast in the desert. I am the shadow which sates

As some soldiers were making their nightly rounds, they found some **f**orty of the 'weary' who they say were coming to offer a votive to Saint Esculapius and that this votive consisted of running without stopping, making ever greater circles. The weary come from Catalonia and do not stop their complaints. One of the soldiers wished to hold them but they paid no heed to what was shouted to them, which was that for the love of God and in the name of Our Lord the **K**ing they halt and give an account and explanation of their strange behavior. Thereupon they fired three volleys at them, two into the air and the third at their persons and four fell, but they say that badly wounded and bleeding they could **b**arely manage to rise and run, only to fall again a little further, get up again, and so on to the death.

And now two monks are running in circles about the cloister which is wondrous to see and it **S**eems they never tire and declare that Saint Esculapius has appeared to them in their dreams and has ordered them to run about in circles and has promised them weal and salvation. And it seems that this Saint Esculapius is not the saint after all but the pagan god Æsculapius and that the demon took his shape and is giving these orders and that the weary are appearing everywhere, and even as far away as Flanders a batallion of the weary began to run about in the middle of a battle and contaminated **t**he enemy. The heretics proved to be better runners than our own and went off running all the way to Galicia and even further. And now hundreds of the weary awaken in the middle of the night and begin running. But it is not running but rather like dancing. But now they **h**ave left and have never been heard from again. They must have died . . .

dissipated it, along with my dream.
 The dispute, my friend, lasted all night and only the dawn
 —In mine that they are grapes.
 —In mine that they are needles which knit destinies.
 —In mine that they are the eyes of those that sleep.
 they shine.
 —In mine it is said that they are very small and this is why
 God.
 —In mine that they are fingernails which tear at the heart of
 —In mine it is said that stars are tears, said the other.
 death's-heads made of sugar.
 —In my country, on the other hand, it is said that stars are
 burned at the stake of the sun.
 smile. That the innumerable shadows die of laughter waiting to be
 my country it is believed that stars are teeth and that the heavens
 —I do not fear the fear of stars, retorted the fear of birds. In
 kiss you. And you must suffer and cry out for death.
 gathers tamely in the shadow of the slave who does not wish to
 one sees it. They think it distance, and when one least expects it, it
 from the other. Other times my nought becomes so great that no
 between two atoms, and with an indivisible gesture separates one
 doubts. My nought becomes small and insignificant, and lies
 enters and insinuates amongst beings and flatters them with
 things that are to be. My nought is very different. My nought
 nothing without abyss, a dense and gravid nought pregnant with
 veils and cries. What I scorn is the nothingness which they hide. A
 —You are mistaken, said the fear of stars, if you think I scorn

Ferrantes will never again paint those sets of four paintings on the walls of *a* room, in the style of a cassone. It is because he has gone mad. The Duke and Duchess of A. had charged him with the decoration of one of the salons of their winter palace. There they asked him to paint allegories of the four seasons. As is his custom the painter set to executing the four paintings at the same time. And he must have got confused, for it was raining in all of them. The Duke and Duchess, seeing this, feared a second World Deluge and ordered the painter to desist but the *l*atter paid no heed. He painted a well and through it all the water from the rains that the poor man had put so much art into representing quickly ran off. Without Ferrantes' moving a finger, the trees dried up and the hills lost their verdure. The matrons grew thin and the children grew old and died of hunger. They say that by the end of the year, there were only skeletons in the painting and it rent the heart to see this. Finally they decided that Ferrantes should continue the work. The latter painted a pig in each season. It struck the Duke and Duchess as strange that the pigs were old. It was this fact that opened their eyes. Whoever paints pigs old does so because he does not eat them. It is in this wise that it was discovered that Ferrantes was a relapsed Jew. They wished to put him to the torture but he paid no heed for he had gone mad years ago, although no one had discovered it until then. They say that even death at the stake made him laugh.

My soul said to me, Death has come for you and
Be quiet, I said. Does one take provisions to a sea of
are you still in this sea of sins and you haven't
provided for the journey
the Generous One



The fear of birds dressed in green was walking, eyes closed. It was feared my fear I feared it so much that one day I saw it incarnate. bearing us the plague or crying poems of battle. Above all, I moon. But I did fear birds. I saw them fall dead, turning to dust, feared the fall of the stones of the night nor the nearness of the dead. For years I feared birds which fell from the sky. I never another fear very much my own and of long standing, almost scorn but from nostalgia. This fear brought back the memory of my friend, your fear of the stars made me smile, not from

laughable. tremblings and cries to itself. It incarnates them and makes them could not be afraid of it because a fear incarnate attracts Last night I chanced to dream of it and I was not afraid of it. I cackling and hiding its hands.

welcoming the fear of birds. own fear incarnate in my dream, which to my surprise was knowing him, I dined him to be the fear of stars. It was your had never seen, quickly went over to open the door. Without the household, a Christian slave whom I did not know, whom I was knocking at my door. I did not want to open, but a servant of My friend, you must know that in my dream the fear of birds

veil. And this veil likes to hide. in scorn the veil. The veil separates and hides. Nature itself is a —You are mistaken, replied the fear of birds. You are mistaken are nothing; they are veils and cries. abyss; they are the seeds of the infinite. But what are birds? They smile, said the fear of the stars first. The stars are the fire of the —Seeing you in the doorway of the poet's house, I can only Here is what they said to each other.

They presented to Their Majesties a dog who sings xácaras, and accompanied by musicians, sings and dances so excellently well it is splendid to watch. But Their Majesties spoke to him and he answered and they asked his master how this could be, that to sing was already quite good, but to speak was something diabolical and the man had to confess that the dog was not a dog but a *b*oy disguised as a dog. And Their Majesties ordained that his pelt be removed and they discovered a naked dwarf and His Majesty ordained that he be given forty lashes. And while they were flogging him the dwarf began to bark and he began to grow hair and became a dog in front of everyone.

And informed of this His Majesty ordered him to be called and he asked him *why*, being a dog, he wanted to dress up as a dog but the dog answered not with words but barks and this made Their Majesties laugh a great deal. And they ordained that he be left for the entertainment of the dwarfs and they play and laugh with him and he eats only chocolate.

Returning from Sihuenza where the meetings of the illiterate, presided over by the King, were held, there came to the ears of Their Majesties certain rumors that tell of a village of cretins who speak in riddles and who *issu*e edicts which are identical to those of the King and this always happens a little before the King gets the idea of serving them, and hearing this counselor Peres exclaimed that this was a mockery of Their Majesties and the King said he was not of this opinion, that wisdom usually speaks through the mouths of cretins and that he thanks *Divi*ne Providence that in this wise It confirms the rightness of his dispositions and decrees and he ordained that money be given them to build a church in their village. But it collapsed, for if the voices of cretins usually *spea*k in unison with the Holy Spirit, their hands are clumsy.

son of Mary. A righteous man whom you should come to know
 know that I learned this reading the gospels of the prophet Isai,
 I am I and Allah the Creator has made me for ever. You should
 to live, you touch, caress and inhale it yourself and that you repeat,
 —So be it, said the judge. I hope that in the days you have left
 has made me come to myself.
 Order the torturer to stop! implored the Christian. The pain
 cannot be yours, for you are not your body.
 —Whose is this cry?, asked the judge, feigning surprise. It
 Christian began to cry out.
 himself inundated in those rivers overflowing with shame, the
 Christian. At the first lashes, feeling his flesh shredded, seeing
 Merciful, Allah called for a torturer and ordered him to flog the
 Then after meditating and secretly and piously invoking the
 fall I will already be in heaven.
 —This body is not my body, replied the Christian. When I
 of the night we call your body.
 judge. The blood which will run from your neck will be that river
 —But this shadowy body, this appearance is you, said the
 madmen pure souls with joy.
 night, but rather precipitate the dawn which devastates, which
 been a naught. By killing it you add nothing to the felicity of the
 you will annihilate a shadow, but this shadow is and has always
 —You will not be able to do it, replied the Christian. Perhaps
 (and I am that very one).
 rant, the most withdrawn, the most unjust of believers knows
 —That I can kill you even the most humble, the most igno-
 that one can only kill shadows.

I have seen the captive Moor again. They have examined him once again, seeking errors, and they have found them. But few, and pardonable ones. What cannot be pardoned, I believe, is that he declares himself Christian and Muslim at the same time and a partisan of war between Christians and Muslims. He has told me that war is a game similar to chess. I replied with arguments which I believe to be solid, but he does not even listen to them, and repeats that there is a holy war among all things created and that God is He Who plays with us, insufflating hate and love. Other Moors cannot tolerate him, and have even beat him, but he continues imperturbably preaching the multiplication of wars and the peace of hearts.

They say that he hides a treasure. They tortured him and he finally confessed that he has hidden his treasure near the Sacromonte in Valparaíso. They despatched two monks, accompanied by an escort, to find it and bring it back. They returned with a checked sphere. They split it in two and found within some papers which they say were written by Saint Christino, in which is upheld the indissoluble unity of the two religions. And this provoked horror. The Moor replied that what is inside is appearance and what is outside, that is, the squares, reality. He put the globe back together and set up the chess-men. It is played with four armies. All alliances are allowed. It is the ideal game for drawing in the enemy and attacking him from the rear. We played for three days and nights and Father Lucas Santa Maria checkmated one of the kings. But the other two armies, Father Luna's and Father Speculo's, allied themselves against him and the remaining troops have joined together and without a king go from one band to another. It is a very complicated game. But nothing more than a game.

All right, my dearly beloved, my inestimable friend, you know that I have no secrets from you, but do not press me, do not rush me (I already feel your spirit which invades my hand and draws it to the paper, mounts it and forces it to leap, makes it wheel and, sated with words, breathe in lines of the purest jet-black.

In this blue rixals, which the memory of you inhabits and warms, I would like to recount to you a singular fact.

Do you remember the day of our last meeting? You, the dark-skinned Jew, the surgeon, the doctor, and me, the student at Coimbra, the Christian. Times have changed.

Now, here I am writing you, me, the believer, me, the poet of luminous nostalgia, of the green peace of the mountains, of the ardent and secret sword, of the mystery of the eyes; here you are reading me, you, the Christian, the pastor of sorrows and of the atrocious sentences, you, my friend.

I do not wish to speak to you of the moment of greatest pain which haunts your heart between two beats and makes your hair stand and makes your eyes drop like hail from the sky, which seizes the soul as the teeth seize the tongue in the middle of the night. I would like to silence this sorrow and girdle it with the toga of silence.

I wish to speak to you of our last dispute. To do this, I am going to reproduce another, very different one, between Judge Aslam and a Christian. A friend told it to me, and I cannot wait another day, another hour; I am already telling it, I have already told it. This is it.

Many years, many centuries ago, in our much regretted Kûruba, a Christian was brought before Judge Aslam and asked for death.

—Your poor wretch, exclaimed the judge. Who told you that one can kill someone who has done nothing wrong?
—Kill me, said the Christian. For if you kill me, you will understand that my death is impossible, that there is no true death.

Post scriptum.

That the diverse papers and things which Brother Antonio left were examined, there being found papers written in aljami, Mixtarabic Hispanic, and in Arabic and they treat of various themes. And the above miscellany was put at the disposition of Father Superior and others and the latter have ordained them to be burned, but this has not been done, and I believe they should be returned to whoever wrote them as was ordained in the testament where it says of certain papers and manuscripts received from Tunis and which treat of various affairs, that they be handed over to whom they concern and if there are found words and conceits which could offend the readers, let those parts be burned and that which is not burned be returned to Ibrahim Gomes Mulay who wrote them to me and who is now dead.

Let fifty Masses be said for his soul.



RAUL RUIZ

THE BOOK
OF
TRACTATIONS

The Book of Disappearances / The Book of Tractations have been conceived by Raul Ruiz at the time of his multimedia exhibition *The Expulsion of Moors* in Boston 1990 (prod : ICA/CAT Fund, Boston - IVAM, Valence - CNAP, Paris).

The Book of Disappearances / The Book of Tractations was originally written in Spanish.

English translation: Warren Niesluchowski
Drawings and Calligrammes: Pascal Millet
Design: Raul Ruiz

Filmmaker, theatre director, writer, Raul Ruiz (born July 25, 1941 - Puerto Montt, Chile) adopts and recycles traditions of both popular and learned cultures. An allegorical examination centred on the multiplicity of viewpoints and the ambiguity between reality and fiction are central elements in the abundant work of this poetic artist, explorer of images and builder of labyrinths who expresses himself on film, in the theatre and in his writings.

ALSO PUBLISHED BY DIS VOIR

Raoul Ruiz : Essays by Christine Buci-Glucksmann and Fabrice Revault d'Allones. Interview with, text and visual lay-out by Raul Ruiz, Paris, 1987

À la poursuite de l'Île au Trésor, Paris, 1989.

The Book of Disappearances / The Book of Tractations, Paris, 1990 (reprint 2005).

Poetic of Cinema, Paris, 1996 (reprint 2005).

© ÉDITIONS DIS VOIR, 2005

1 CITÉ RIVERIN

75010 PARIS

website : <http://www.disvoir.com>

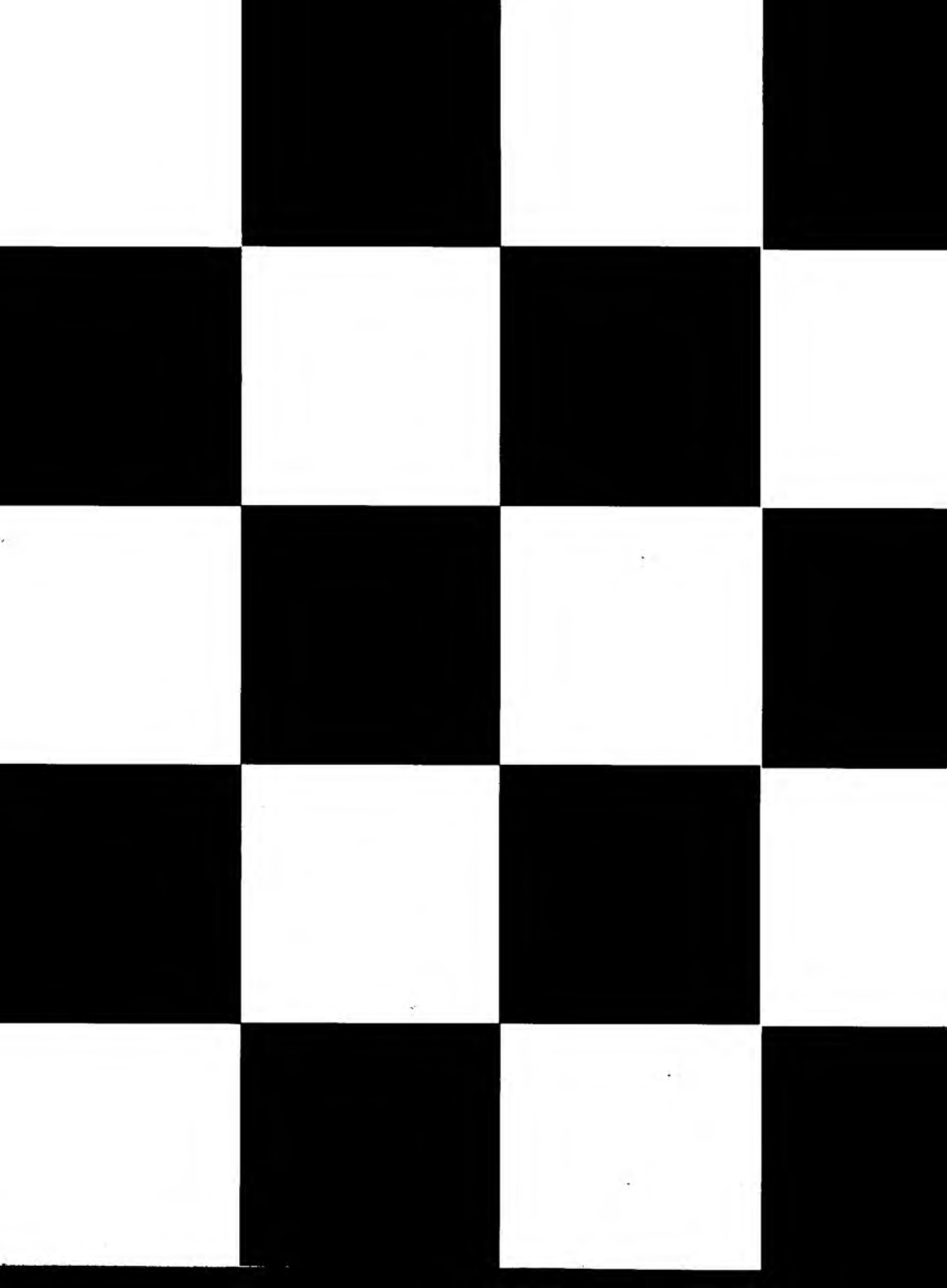
e-mail : contact@disvoir.com

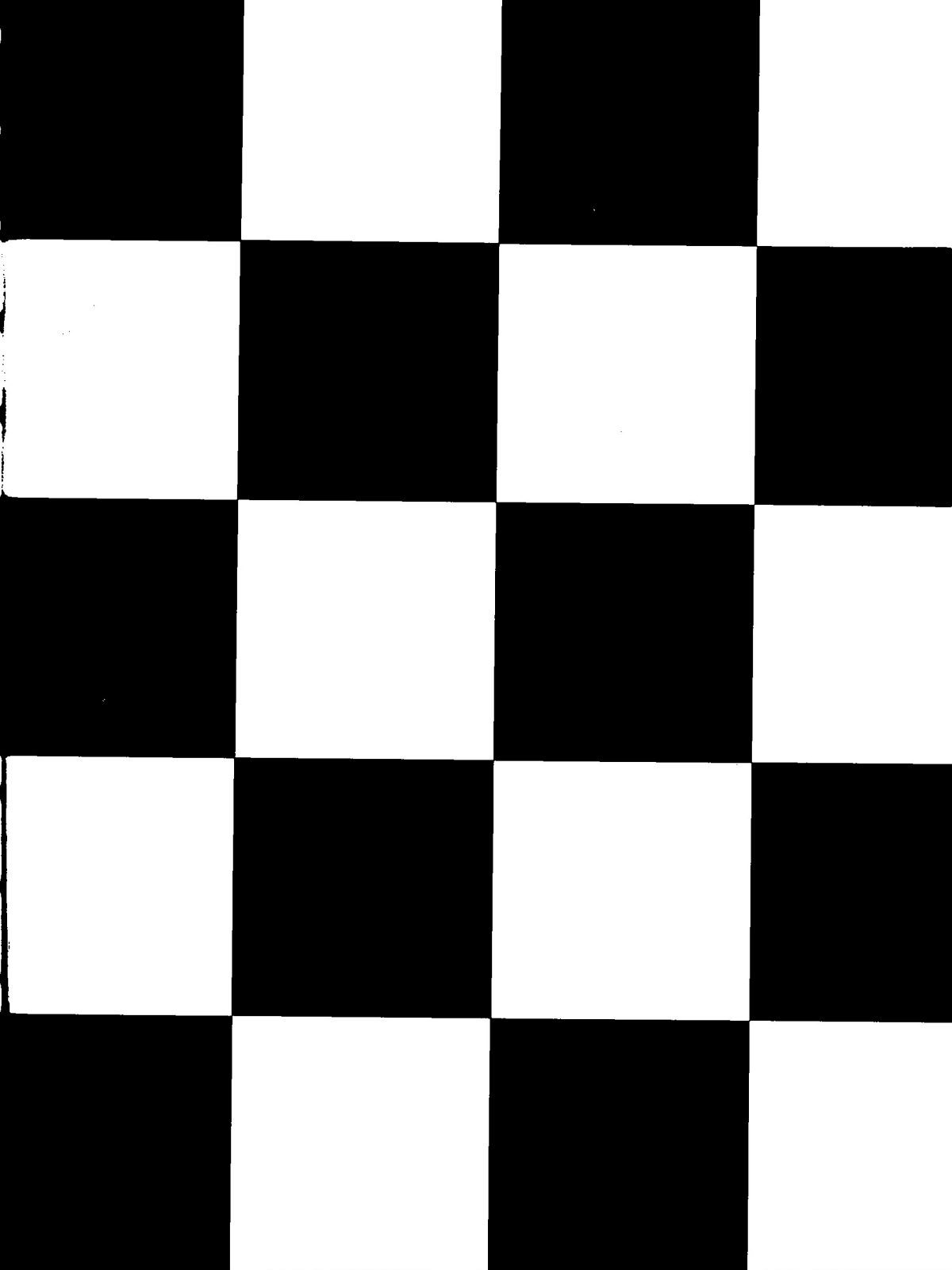
ISBN : 2 914563 19 1

PRINT IN EUROPE.

Policrom, Barcelona, Spain

(march 2005)





RAUL RUIZ

THE BOOK
OF
TRACTATIONS



All right, my dearly beloved, my inestimable friend, you know that I have no secrets from you, but do not press me, do not rush me (I already feel your spirit which invades my hand and draws it to the paper, mounts it and for**C**es it to leap, makes it wheel and, sated with words, breathe in lines of the purest jet-black.

In this blue rizala, which the memory of you inebriates and warms, I would like to recount to you a singular fact.

Do you remember the day of our last meeting? You, the dark-skinned Jew, the surgeon, the d**O**ctor, and me, the student at Coimbra, the Christian. Times have changed.

Now, here I am writing you, me, the believer, me, the poet of luminous nostalgia, of the green peace of the mountains, of the ardent and secret sword, of the mystery of the eyes; here you are reading me, you, the Christian, the pastor of sorrows and of the atrocious sentences, you, my friend.

I do not wish to speak to you of the moment of greatest pain which halts your heart between two beats and makes your hair stand and makes your eyes drop like hail from the sky, which seizes the soul as the teeth seize the to**n**gue in the middle of the night. I would like to silence this sorrow and girdle it with the toga of silence.

I wish to speak to you of our last dispute. To do this, I am going to repro**d**uce another, very different one, between Judge Aslam and a Christian. A friend told it to me, and I cannot wait another day, another hour; I am already telling it, I have already told it. This is it.

Many years, many centuries ago, in our much**h** regretted Kúrtuba, a Christian was brought before Judge Aslam and asked for death.

—Your poor wretch, exclaimed the judge. Who told you that one can kill someone who has done nothing wrong?

—Kill me, said the Christian. For if you kill me, you will understand that my death is impossible, that there is no true death,

that one can only kill sh**a**dows.

—That I can kill you even the most humble, the most ignorant, the most withdrawn, the most unjust of believers knows (and I am that very one).

—You will not be able to do it, replied the Christian. Perhaps you will annihilate a shadow, but this shadow is and has always been a naught. By killing it you add nothing to the felicity of the night, but rather precipitate the dawn which devastates, which maddens pure souls with joy.

—But this shadowy body, this appearance is you, said the judge. The blood which will run from your neck will be that river of the night we call your body.

—This body is not my body, rep**l**ied the Christian. When I fall I will already be in heaven.

Then after meditating and secretly and piously invoking the Merciful, Aslam called for a torturer and ordered him to flog the Christian. At the first lashes, feeling his flesh shredded, seeing himself inundated in those rivers overflowing with shame, the Christian began to cry out.

—Whose is this cry?, asked the judge, **f**eigning surprise. It cannot be yours, for you are not your body.

Order the torturer to stop!, implored the Christian. The pain has made me come to myself.

—So be it, said the judge. I hope that in the days you have left to live, you touch, caress and inha**b**it yourself and that you repeat, I am I and Allah the Creator has made me for ever. You should know that I learned this reading the gospels of the prophet Isa, son of Mary. A righteous man whom you should come to know better.

My friend, your fear of the stars made me smile, not from scorn but from nostalgia. This fear brought back the memory of another fear very much my own and of long standing, almost dead. For years I feared birds which fell from the sky. I never feared the fall of the stones of the night nor the nearness of the moon. But I did fear birds. I saw them fall dead, turning to dust, bearing us the plague or crying poems of battle. Above all, I feared my fear. I feared it so much that one day I saw it incarnate. The fear of birds dressed in green was walking, eyes closed. It was cackling and hiding its hands.

Last night I chanced to dream of it and I was not afraid of it. I could not be afraid of it because a fear incarnate attracts tremblings and cries to itself. It incarnates them and makes them laughable.

*My friend, you must know that in my dream the fear of birds was knocking at my door. I did not want to **O**pen, but a servant of the household, a Christian slave whom I did not know, whom I had never seen, quickly went over to open the door. Without knowing him, I **di**vined him to be the fear of stars. It was your own fear incarnate in my dream, which to my surprise was welcoming the fear of birds.*

Here is what they said to each other.

—Seeing you in the doorway of the poet's house, I can only smile, said the fear of the stars first. The stars are the fire of the abyss; they are the seeds of the infinite. But what are birds? They are nothing; they are veils and cries.

—You are mistaken, replied the fear of birds. You are mistaken in scorning the veil. The veil separates and hides. Nature itself is a veil. And this veil likes to hide.

We don't say to Mr. Deerp that come and
 here you are
 in little
 this way
 and you are
 for the
 One

—You are mistaken, said the fear of stars, if you think I scorn veils and cries. What I scorn is the nothingness which they hide. A nothing without abysm, a dense and gravid nought pregnant with things that are to be. My nought is very different. My nought enters and insidiates amongst beings and flatters them with doubts. My nought becomes small and insignificant, and lies between two atoms, and with an indivisible gesture separates one *from* the other. Other times my nought becomes so great that no one sees it. They think it distance, and when one least expects it, it gathers tamely in the shadow of the slave who does not wish to kiss you. And you must suffer and cry out for death.

—I do not fear the fear of stars, retorted the fear of birds. In my country it is believed that stars are teeth and that the heavens smile. That the innumera^ble shadows die of laughter waiting to be burned at the stake of the sun.

—In my country, on the other hand, it is said that stars are death's-heads made of sugar.

—In mine *e* it is said that stars are tears, said the other.

—In mine that they are fingernails which tear at the heart of God.

—In mine it is said that they *are* very small and this is why they shine.

—In mine that they are the eyes of those that sleep.

—In mine that they are needles which knit destinies.

—In mine that they are grapes.

The dispute, my friend, lasted all night and only the dawn dissipated it, along with my dream.

Bi-smi-Llahi-r-rahmani-r-rahim. The histoire and tale of Abu Ibn al-Qartabus and al-hadiz of Isa (Alayim il salaam!). And the teller seggeth that Isa, béond l'al-janna (in Paradise) and seonde thas Bani Israila saden He naeffre was bore~~n~~ or sette fot (Allah taala!) on thas contres and landes, and preched al-khutba that thai ahten nohht bileafe in His seggende and warnunge quych wæren vain & to lahhenn, & wanne Isa the C (Sal-la al-lahu alayhi was-salam) kennid and cnawed that this is swa, He bed aeche of His schades quych the Israela folc i-sacret holden be quykkend and gan furth that all færenn & wundren **O**n on them mote. And rollende furth thai cam the place neah quhare Mary (Tabaraka wa taala) was weepinde and mornede wel sore and tæherende. And the schades of the Y-sacret, schakyng away the asch and pouder of the rode, crepende rrebibkadas and withth gret umilitet preched al-khutba and thas Bani Israila gaderode manigon and in great noumbre heorden the gleamende wrathen the reisuns of the quykkend schades.

And what they said.

The first shadow. I am the shadow of the Christ Child, who spake with the doctors of the law, wh~~o~~ said what he already knew and was to know, a shadow perfumed and fragrant and azure, wind-swept and novel, made of laughter and chants. The sun cast me against the wall of the temple, and there I will have to live until I am destroyed by the father of my father.

And the second shadow said, I am the shadow of Christ, the one which stayed and lived at the house where the marriage feast at Cana was held. I hold in my hands the shadows of a loaf and and a fish. I am the shadow that comes in through the eyes and through the mouth. The shadow that is eaten, that feeds unceasingly and which sends its breath into the bellies of the righteous who fast in the desert. I am the shadow which sates

hunger and which flies inside men and thins the blood and lightens the humors. The shadow of saffron and cumin, a life powdery and sparse but fixed in its center. I am the shadow which makes one salivate. I invite to banquets and keep away sleep and tickle the nostrils.

Thus spake the third shadow: I am the shadow of Christ on the mou~~n~~t which was cast during the sermon in which He spake and taught his doctrine (may God bless Him and bestow gifts on Him). I am the shadow which bit the earth, which gnashed its teeth made of eternal nou~~g~~ht, of uncreated nought, a res. The form that Christ (Isa)—blessèd be He—suspended in time, and the shadow that causes the plants and perfumed flowers to wax and wane ~~e~~ternally following the figure of His breathing. And that the supple (may God perfume it) and most sweet wind which separ~~a~~ted His words is and shall be the music of the dance of the flowers, and that the cat which sought to protect itself from the heat of the sun and sought that shadow there encountered cool and ~~e~~ternity. And the selfsame happened with the ants and the bees which found themselves blessed by sweet shade (the luminous darkness beside which all light is but darkness and blindness). These cr~~e~~atures now come with me and follow me because God (the One, the Adorable) thus ordered and Christ too was able to wish it (may God bestow His gifts on Him).

And the fourth shadow said, I am the black look of torture. I am the wicked figure of the Cross plundered and defiled by the followers of Pope Urban the Frenchman (may God damn him and dry up his to~~n~~gue and never forgive him and make him burn). I am the shadow of the Cross, borne by that sultan (may he be damned) and that campeador the Cid (may burning not suffice). I am ashamed of my figure and my arms. I do not dance. My words are bitter but my soul is with Christ and may Allah protect it. I will be forgotten; I will be nothing more than the image of two

roads that cross; I will be nothing more than the point at which four bricks meet; I will be nothing more, even much less *than* a little mark. I will not even be a sifr, a cipher, a zero. But behold, Allah (a thousand times blessed) has allowed me to draw nigh unto you, blessed shadows, me, without hope, and gives me a tongue, speech, and voice (albeit hoarse and full of bitterness). And I *O*we you witness of the reason for His clemency (for He, the Pious, the Merciful, pardons). The day of the crucifixion (God curse the word), the moon cast its light on me, creating me cursed in my center, but blessed on my borders. A silvery light it was, the light of the crescent moon, a light which ann~~u~~ls all shadow. That moon shone forth, showing my form, all wickedness, and my soul darkly joyous.

And then the fifth shadow interjected and said, I am the shadow of the ass of the moon, the shadow of the Blessed, of the ass of the future which is to visit Paradise bearing the Prophet (God give him a thousand gifts).

And with one voice the five shadow*S* began chanting praises to God.

(With one voice, not many, to one God, not three.)

*I look at you so that you will look at me.
 I look at you in order to surprise you.
 I surround you with my eyes and take you prisoner.
 I look at the book of your life situated just behind
 your head.*

Abu Ubayid

The guilty look: the one that looks at pudendal zones or excrement and stains the eyes—the stain is visible to any good physiognomist. To operate on the stain (cataracts?), the surgeon should wait for the beginning of the new moon. The patient should keep his eyes closed until the full moon. In this way the stains of the ‘mirror of faults’ will absorb the impurities of the eye.

A furtive glance during the sexual act physically disturbs the child-to-be. Thus Ibn Hazm (in the Neckband of the Dove) recalls the case of the birth of a black child of two white parents; after consulting the physiognomist they found out that the black doll of *one* of the slaves, left near the door, had entered the too curious mother through her eyes, infecting her progeny.

The eye that reads the world. There exist two types of looking, one which looks and scans the veil of things (sensation) and another that reads and *sees* only transcendent reality (the eye of perception). But when the saint, able to see only with the eye of perception, looks over the world with his gaze, he does not see the world, but reads it. In this case, the eye scans the landscape from right to left and the pupils rise and fall softly, *subtly* drawing in

the air the peaceful waves that are a figure of the plenitude of the sea of the soul.

The eye that looks behind the veil. The demon leads certain men to copy the creation of Allah, and thus to abase it by seeking to imitate it. This is a sin. The sinner is easily recognized because his pupils, when examined by the light of a lamp, are slightly rectangular or triangular, depending on the case. For the square, the circle, and the triangle are the elementary figures upon which all vision is based.

Other cases.

Blue eyes. The worst color: hypocrisy.

Bulging eyes: Shameless, lazy, disloyal.

Elongated eyes: Perverse.

Reddish eyes: Valiant and decided.

He whose eyes are shifty and sharp-looking: a thief and a traitor.

He whose eyes scan from left to right: a blasphemer and of evil sentiments.

He who always looks beyond you to someone we do not see is already dead. Kissing his hands is dangerous.

Ibn al-Razi

Alas! the moon is not

no

the

of

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the



We are the moon in the darkness of the night

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

the

But the story of Saints Leila and Asha astounds me . . .

One, a sinner in her youth and with big eyes, cried when she saw the evil of the world. They say that her crying gathered the clouds and made it rain. They asked for her in towns where there was drought and, not wishing to be the instrument of troubled agreements and petty dealings, she went off to the desert **W**here she settled down to cry, feeding on her own tears.

One day, soon after these events, a palm tree that was the pride of the oasis called El Oasis, began to move before the eyes of all. It abandoned El Oasis and went off. It was lost in the desert and it was impossible for the knights who were following it to catch up with it, and even though it moved slowly, it always remained at the same **e** distance from the cavalry in spite of the fact that many times they ran at it from many directions whipping their horses like unto the death.

The palm tree drew nigh to the holy woman and protected her with its shadow. And from its dates, as if from clouds, rained holy rain. Many pilgrims gathered to drink of the water of the tree that rains, but the saint took no note and thought but to give than**k**s to Allah for his many gifts.

At that time, not far from there, another saint, having fasted many days and nights, became so light that the wind carried her off and supended her in the air, but she made nought of the miracle but to thank Allah and then set about her praying and beatifically suffered to be carried to where the palm tree was and once there the wind began to blow softly around her, making her turn weightlessly around the other saint. And neither of the **t**wo paid any attention to this miracle, but impassively continued meditating and giving thanks to Allah.

They have since died.

From the transcript of the treatise on pious cuts and incisions, I have selected for you these sentences and sayings which will come into **y**our hands when you have burned this missive (macama). You will find that we owe the first transcript of the discourse on surgery by whistling to Abu Hashim and that in order to write **it** he first had to walk in the desert, suffering himself to be carried forward by a lone whistle which went before him and and **sh**owed the way. This whistle led him to the cemetery of whale-cities not far from the sea. You will also see that that the city of bones is guarded by whistling vipers and that in it live the fakirs, readers of the dance, as the simple folk call these holy men, dance being **nO**thing but the movement of vipers between the very vast walled bones of the whales without end.

The readers of the dance translate it into whistles and have invented a language which expresses itself via warbles and trills which deliciou**S**ly fix the terrible truths of the metropolitan whales. In the center of this city, in the middle of this Medina of the dolphins, hidden between beards and fangs, the alumma of fakirs whistles and memorizes the incessant movement of the vipers and they do not have the time to enter into the terror of the points so furtively traced, but on the contrary extract from the latter practical teachings. Thanks to these, the treatise of surgery by whistle has rea**ch**ed us . . .

These fakirs pray day and night with luminous and impalpable hands which the Powerful One guides and weave wings most light of painful white, and when they finally finish these wings of prayer, they attach them to their bodies, and since they are **no**t stout they easily fly and as they fly they whistle.

A group of fakirs was carried off by the sea breeze to the

islands, and there they were hunted^d with nets. Afterwards they were forced to explain themselves and they did so in the only language they know, that of whistles. The natives of these islands, which they call the Canaries, have kept the language but have forgotten the text. The treatise on surgery was recovered by a converted inhabitant of the islands who brought it back to Tunis, where the manuscript^t is venerated. Everyone would like to whistle it but they cannot because the whistled language was kept in the Canary Islands and the fakirs seem to forgotten it, because they say that latterly they have killed the vipers and have devoted themselves to writing prayers with leaps.

As-Sarisi says, and it must be true, that the story of the blue veil and the cruel Sultan Muyahid must have happened otherwise and not in Affrick but in Persia, but the substance and savor give it value and perennity. I heard it years ago and I do not know if I will be able to satisfy your desire and tell it to you and frighten you.

It is said, then, that Sultan Muyahid, who punished by cutting the body in two halves and scattering the brains, the tamer of white ants, the choleric, received the blue veil from the hands of one of his victims. He was already holding it in his hands when the body of the latter had been cut clean and his brains were traveling through the entrails of the falcon. The veil, made of glow-worms, quivered as if it were breathing and attracted the winds. The Sultan picked it up and he presented it to one of his wives. To thank him, the poor thing wished to show it off the next day. That night the women of the harem discovered that the veil had erased the mouth of the Sultan's favorite. The Sultan ordered the other women to use it and in each case the veil erased their mouths and nostrils. It soon became known that Muyahid the Cruel possessed a harem of women without mouths. Thirsty to look, famished to hear songs. This mute harem caused talk and the Sultan had to forbid that it be mentioned in books or spoken of.

He killed a great many people. All who spoke ill were executed in the presence of the four hundred women without mouths.

Until the day the veil was carried off on a summer breeze.

They saw it fly off into the distance and up to the sky. The astronomers noted it and Hussein ibn Kartabu for a time flew along with it and was afraid. Then it softly fell to earth one

winter's morning not far from Seville. A peasant woman found it there and discovering its roughness she used it as a depilatory. *It* circulated from hand to hand, crasing the lifelines of all the women. Then the wind carried it off. I know that many things happened, but I have forgotten them.

But you, my friend, would like to know what I think and opine of the use of the veil. I know that the Christians *prize* it and hold it up as an example. Paul the Apostle recommends it. Tertullian exalts it.

But it is not certain.

There is only one *veil*, the blue veil which effaces lips and nostrils. Of it I will tell you on another occasion.

It is said: there are large eye**e**s and small eyes. It is said: everything is smaller than the eye that looks, an eye that can suffer a castle, a city enter through it.

But if an eye looks at another eye, it devours and is devoured. It digests and is digested, it vomits and is vom**i**ted.

Within an eye there is no room for another eye.

Thus he spake, devouring him with his eyes.

Then Ibn Mumid looked fixedly upon the Mahdì. He fixed his gaze in the center of that sky, the black eye of that one-eyed man of the de**S**ert.

The Fakir heard and said nothing.

At the same time he fixed his gaze on the Mahdì.

He first considered his right eye. He concentrated his attention on the center of that sky. There he fixed on the point around which all the stars of that universe must needs turn. Then he looked at the left eye. He agai**n** concentrated his attention on the center of that new universe and in this wise ordered the stars, planets, and stones. The fires and the chant.

Then he looked at his eye situated between those two worlds already concentrated and disunite. He submitted them to the center of his one and only eye.

The Mahdì looked around hi**m**. Everything seemed new to him.

—What you see you **a**re seeing without your eyes. All you see is eyes. These eyes are looking at you. This palm tree is an eye; this desert is but one enor**m**ous white eye. Those people are eyes and eyes' eyes. You are now seeing with all these eyes. And now you will not need your own. Be blind.

And saying this he tried to put out the other's eyes, but a guard prevented him.

The Mahdì let out a *ca*ckle.

—It is certain that even in the lips of a poor man, a saint, or a pure man, sedition can reside.

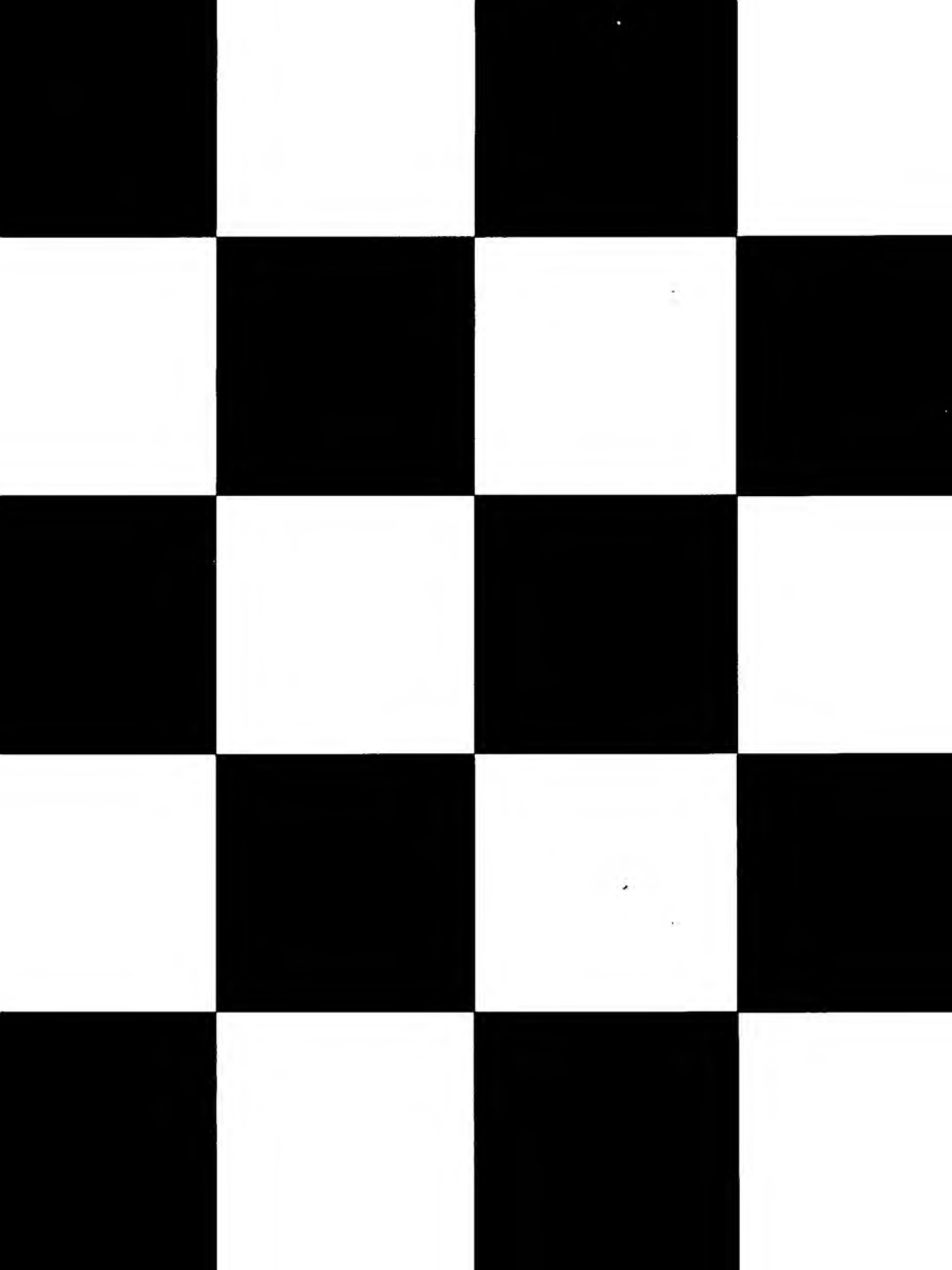
And then, looking at his *k*nights, he said, There is nothing more dang*e*rous than the words*S* of a poor man. His seduction hides sedition.

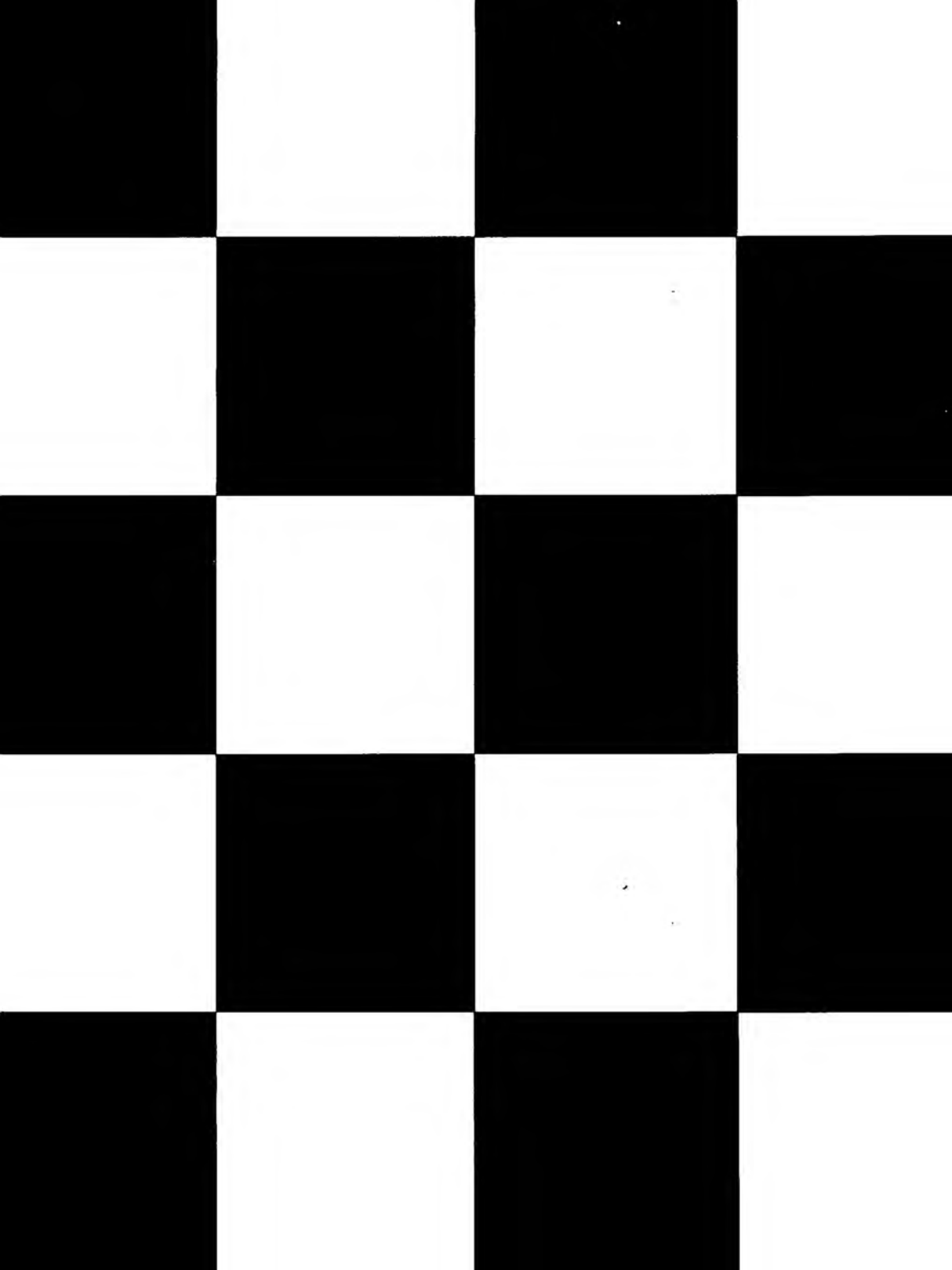
And with *h*is own hands he cut off the head of the Fakir.

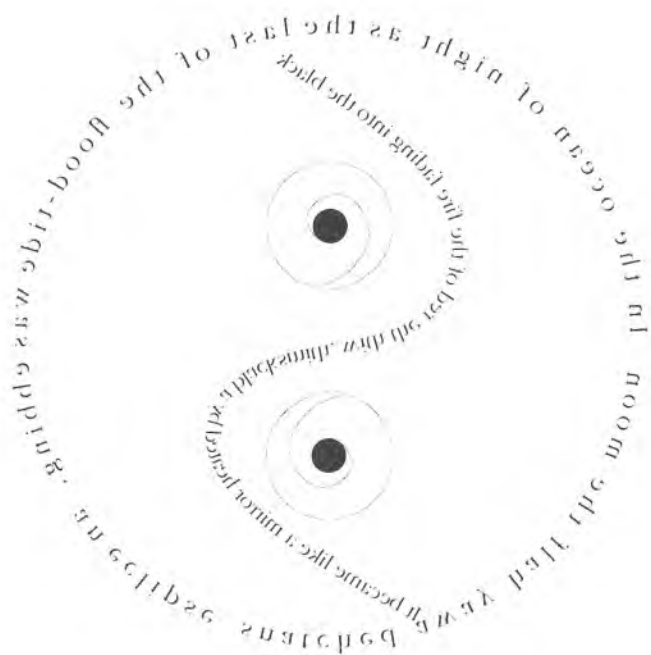
The Jew with **t**he promised lapidary of the bay horse is on his way. This is a copy of Rabbi Halevi's and **h**is a copy of the mute lapidary of Villena, which owes much to the **w**ritings of your Alfonse the Wise.

Here it says that the stone**e**s of the lapidary of the bay horse are commented upon in the order in which they turned about the Virgin Mary, and this d**e**serves an explanation, which is the one I wish to submit, show and r**e**nder to you, one I think belongs more to you than to me.

And the Andalusians of Tunis rel**a**te that those stones were thrown in Hornachuelas at an infidel woman**n**. The stone-throwers from Hornichuelas came from Menorca, where they stone from a **d**istance. They used to put the victim, hands and feet attached, half-buried on the summit**t** of a mountain. Then they dispersed, deploying **t**hemselves several leagues away with stones on which they wrote insults. The infidel**e**, a married woman, had sinned with a curate whose throat was cut at the very moment at **w**hich they were surprised in the act. The infidel had succumbed to the heat given off by caresses which the curate was giving to a chair in her h**o**use, caresses which were sapient and subtle, almost painful, obstinately vicious and so long that you could measure time with them and the hours became centuries. They set the married woman on top of a mountain. They **C**ast stones at her with one voice. But they say the married woman **w**as a devotee of the Virgin Mary. They then explain thusly that instead of striking her, the stones began to turn about her and, **p**olished by the blessed breeze which held them aloft, became precious stones, of rare and calming color. Some lapidologist**s** came to see her and when they arrived the married woman was lev**i**tating, now collected and







somnolent, protected by her smile. Ha**v**ing nothing else to do, the doctors classified the stones while the married woman rose up into the sky. She was hidden by a cloud and we**n**t away with it, raining and greening fields a**s** far as the Kingdom of Navarre, where she touched down to earth. The married woman entered the convent and her stones **w**ere stolen.

Someone told me that the stones had **b**ecome precious but that it was not easy to classify them for they changed color and nature**e** and it appears that they reflected each other very deep**l**y as they say happens with the souls **o**f saints in Paradise. And the insults had been **n**erased and in their stead newer words made up sayings of great wisdom and understanding**g** and that these were **t**hey, a true book of nature. It appears that a few pe**o**ple copied them but ma**n**y were lost. The next time I will send you a few.

The child who lost his head at the very moment that his father was decapitated.

And as Ordoño and his knights were **b**esieging the fort of Badaxoz, they went from besiegers to besieged. And Ordoño said to his men that whoever wished to stay **shou**ld stay, as long as they were no more than twelve. And that the rest should leave and **br**ing the news of their sacrifice to Toledo. But among the first who volunteered to stay was his son. Ordoño took him aside and ordered him to leave. Since he refused to do this, Ordoño wounded him in the **b**elly and in one leg and thus **woun**ded he had no other choice but to leave. Ordoño deployed his soldiers in a **h**alf-moon and one of them **h**a^ving pointed out the unu**s**ual and curiou**s** nature of the figure, the **a**ccursèd reconsidered and formed the cross of Isa and in this way our forces defeated them more easily **an**d almost in one **bre**a^th. At the moment that Ordoño was decapitated, his you**n**ger son Sanchez, the headless, the bewitched (Allah confound him), was **d**ining in Toledo. At the exact moment at **w**hich his father **w**as decapitated, his head came off and fell to the floor, where the hounds were **ca**ting. One of them grabbed the head **in** his maw and ran off into **t**he country**S**ide, followed by Ordoño's kinsmen and servants. They could not find him. Whereupon his kinsmen decided **t**hat the body should be buried **with**out a head and **offe**red a great reward to whoever could offer any news of it or of the dog, who **m**ay have devoured it, in which **ca**se they should immediately kill it **an**d bury it in guise of the head, between the shoulders of Don Sancho. But the dog **w**alked and ran for days and nights with the

head in its maw. Arriving as he did at the river Guadalquivir, at a place of calm waters he put it down so it could take root there. And the head flowered.

Very quickly there grew up a tree and in the crown was the head hidden among red and white flowers. And each time that a walker plucked a flower, the sound of a flute was heard and if several flowers were plucked the tree sounded a melody. And in autumn when the leaves fell, lute music was heard and the head began to sing. With its eyes closed the head of the handsome Don Sancho sang stories. And these stories were the destiny and future of those who happened by. They came from afar to hear them. Seeing this Our Lord ordered them to cut off the head and he sent it to his son Ibn Hussein, but the latter, seeing the wonder, fell in love with the head. And he would not part from the tree. Seeing this Our Lord ordered that his son be decapitated and his head hung from the selfsame tree as an example. Thereupon he sent it to his son Mustapha the Holy, the Good, the fit, the Everhappy. But seeing the head, Mustapha fell in love and became sad and tearful and had eyes only for the head. And once again the King Our Lord ordered them to cut off his head, and sent it to his third son Mahmoud the Dull, the impassive one, the lover of rats. But seeing the head, Mahmoud began chanting its praises and became silly and of good appetite. The king cut off his head and sent it to the rest of his sons one by one. And all of them were decapitated. Other walkers lost their heads in the same way and soon the tree could no longer be seen hidden behind the mountain of heads. Seeing this the king ordered that the prayer be recited from the tower of heads. Allah took pity and let fall a thunderbolt on the Atalahaya, this watchtower of the decapitated. Allah is clement.

the data is all over the place
and it's not clear what's going on
but it seems like the data is
all over the place and it's not
clear what's going on

Of the younger Ziriya or Ibn Ziriya (that son of) only the hate and antipathy which encloses and protects him and piously veils the truth from him has reached me. Ibn Siriyab invented everything and invented nothing. He arrived at a palace and had barely moved a cushion when he would proclaim, This salon was dead and now it lives. Semi-darkness reigned and now all is splendor. And since he said this believing it himself, others believed him without difficulty. Ibn-Siriyab the inventor invented and created from nought, in this wise, all of music, the art of walking, the art of looking afar, astronomy, surgery and algebra. He predicted the invention of death without pain and codified incisions. He invented the tale for several voices. He wrote poems in which animals and men dialogued. His enemies sought his downfall and brought him to Omar Ibn Said, the Old Man. They called him that because he was born old and over the years he was growing younger, albeit not smoothly and slowly, as do those who grow old, but in leaps and bounds and amidst great pain. The old man is not a happy man, even though splendid days of youth and childhood await him before Allah calls him, when he has become a newborn again (but only the Sapient, the Just One, knows when that day will be, He and no one else). Omar the Old is convinced that there is nothing new. He often says, When I was old, what you are showing me as a novelty already existed. Then he invariably repeats, There is nothing new.

The inventor came to the house of a rich merchant, who expected a great contest and with it the definitive destruction of the pedant inventor. On his arrival Ibn-Siriyab said, Yesterday I invented a story which no one has ever invented before: it is about a man who is born old and over the years becomes young.

The **ol**d man interrupted him immediately**y**, saying, This man whom you think you have invented is me. Only Allah creates from nothing. Then he repe**a**ted once again, There i**s** nothing new.

Without flinching the inventor looked him up and down and proclaimed, It is not new to say there is nothing new.

And so saying he confounded the old Omar.

It seems that the shame interrupted his rejuvenation and that now he is growing old just **lik**e everyone else.

In such wise that now, there is **no**thing new.

I am **sen**ding you a poem for **se**veral voices composed by Ibn-Siriyab.

FROM THREE SAILS, A CRY ASIDE
A Morisco comedy in three acts

ACT I

Scene 1

The house of Rodrigo of Triana. Enter Rodrigo, dressed as a Morisco and Ordoño, a Brother of the Order of Our Lady of Merced.

Rodrigo: Say . . .

Ordoño: What you will show me . . . does it delight?

Rodrigo: It makes delight, all stiff and straight.

Ordoño: Driving?

Rodrigo: Singing . . .

Ordoño: Responding, pondering
 From beneath the grave? And now defunct
 Diffuses prose unfounded
 (Prison of the profound and stormy
 Tempest of turbid glosses?)

Rodrigo: Shiver, shiver, like the river
 Into the sea of those our lives
 Which are hylé and sleeping
 Stiffly, confounding
 Gained with lost,
 And rush toward a cautious
 Death, a curse all swelled
 With cries and groans,
 And once corresponded . . .

Ordoño: By virtues catholic

submissively shall ye be yielded
unto Christ, the head of the
church, which is his body, of
which he is the saviour, himself
the church, which he hath
purged with the word of
water, by the word, that he
might present it to himself
a glorious church, not
having spot, or wrinkle, or
any such thing, but that
it should be holy, without
blemish.

Those elementⁿs four . . .

Rodrigo: Said t^o be four, they are a hundred . . .

Ordoño: I do not understand you.

Rodrigo: . . . Virtues

By nature, not mere attitudes
Which through the mouth of spirit Br^eath
Of the Nine Dignities
Conform the powerlessness
Of nought, dissipit
Of emerging multitudes.
No, no, it is not sure th^at Bonitas
Brings goodness or brings beauty
Nor that the four predi^cabilia,
Conforming to the^e admirable
Inca^lculable sloth
Of God, be^st show the contrite
Formula with which is grasped
Bifurcate matter.

Ordoño: Rodrigo of Triana!

. . . Ali

Rodrigo: Mustapha Ibn Arabi
Of Aflatun the servant.

Ordoño: That I have spoken with a traitor!
Heretic, an *al-jami*—a Moor!
Whom I myself did bless,
Who from a mast on high
of the new world the sound,
unceasing, endlessly
renewed, and by a thousand
multiplied, the fear
of infidels and Christic praise,

And cry, Land ho!,
 And virile war chants sing, now vilely
 Changes faith and land and color!
 Wherefore become a justice now
 From this your present weal?
 What availeth you your herd
 Of Judases of yesteryear?

Rodrigo: Naught, Father Ordoño, but naught.
 But not the divinised nought,
 The father of the troubled fate
 Of mortals, not the wabada, the valiant
 War, annihilating nought,
 Of the three ships, one and triune
 Of the New World, indign,
 The Indian: the stupefied
 Diversion. But my nought is nought.
 Nought more than the most tired
 Tiring, than the walk just
 Walked. Almost nothing
 Is my nought, not much
 And three times nothing.
 Free of scent, delighting,
 The breeze that wipes away the laugh
 (The crumbly chalk)
 Of death's-heads
 Leafed for augure
 Powdered, and the rancor
 final which of lunatic
 and calumnious caravelles
 Doth wash the sides.

Ordoño: Now if I understand, Rodrigo.
 Three caravelles are worth

Three death's-heads, and the sails,
 The **w**atches kept, the yards all candles,
 Three walkers sleeping,
 Well wor**t**h three dead,
 And **w**orth thr**e**e navigat**in**g
 Caravelles.

Rodrigo: You are in pain.

Ordoño: To see you convert**t**,
 Renegade, defiant.
 To see the devil right triumphant
 And to see **y**ou unrepentant.

Rodrigo: I could say the **s**ame
 Of you . . .

Ordoño: Of me!

Rodrigo: O Father, friend!
 May Allah be my witness,
 That it is by my faith, for love
 And by the piety He **g**ranted,
 He . . .

Ordoño: Thr**ee**-stringèd lute . . .

Rodrigo: Who is but One . . .

Ordoño: . . . Who is Triune**e**.

Rodrigo: What! Now indign indignant!?

Ordoño: Not indign, but Indian. And you!
 You told m**e** your faith in but One God**d**,
 The God of **f**thunder and triune!

Rodrigo: Triune?

Ordoño: A b**i**rd divine . . .

Rodrigo: A throne?

Ordoño: Palatial love.

- Rodrigo:* Thunder^r?
- Ordoño:* Jehovah, Elohim, and God.
- Rodrigo:* Why three and why not ten?
- Ordoño:* Why but one God and why not two?
- Rodrigo:* You think that God is^s three?
- Ordoño:* Three is one and one is ^tthree.
- Rodrigo:* Three times three . . .
- Ordoño:* Another time!
- Rodrigo:* Nine Dignities . . .
- Ordoño:* O, God!
- Rodrigo:* Wh^at God?
- Ordoño:* Not yours, Godspeed!
- Rodrigo:* You go?
- Ordoño:* To pray for you!
- Rodrigo:* Hal^t, O valiant monk,
And do not go!
- Ordoño:* A prisoner am I . . .
- Rodrigo:* Of^f thy haste, of thy ardent
Impatience, of the fear
Of verity sufficient,
Of earthly points of honor,
Of apathy destroyer,
subtle and soli^citous
Praise, soliciting and silent,
Larva of a pain uns^ounding
And a weaver diligent.
- Ordoño:* Thou speakst of thee and not of ^me!
- Rodrigo:* Wherefore, prⁱthce?

Ordoño: For your wherefore
I will give you reason, Father, friend.

Rodrigo: Pasakawada apprehension.
Is not a gift . . .

Ordoño: It is a song . . .

Rodrigo: I pay attention.

Ordoño: Tell me, you **w**ho are my father,
And the bapt**i**st,
From **t**hose fonts
Of the immortal water,
And **t**he dawn baptismal
Immanent and azure,
Of the sea, and you **t**he ardor,
Tell me now, my father,
Have you **t**hen so soon forgotten
The Indian **f**erocious
Whom you in the fight inclement
Could have slayed?
As you see me shake,
You, noble as you steal
Just fury's prey
And prize, you paid
With your own blood
The tok**e**n of God's love
And painful shedding,
Though baptismal,
Of your tears . . .

Rodrigo: I did baptize you; so what?

Ordoño: I am ans**w**ering a wherefore.

Rodrigo: What will you of me, then?

Ordoño: That you come back to thee.

That you awaken, and remember.

Rodrigo: 'Tis all the same . . .

Ordoño: One for another.

Rodrigo: Who is that one?

Ordoño: It is Rodrigo.

Rodrigo: And who the other?

Ordoño: His demon friend.

Rodrigo: No, Ordoño, not with you
The quarrel or the battle
I undertake unto the raft
Of the foe as it wanders
Wooden in its woe
And wont to be a spark for others.
You are not one of those troops
Nor are you wine of those old skins
Nor a pig of those pigsties.

Ordoño: Your war does not touch or hurt me,
Nor does your peace turn me from mine.
Has one ever seen the fire make a peace
With earth froze, scorch'd? And has the flaccid
Earth, airy and humid, leafy,
Spirited and perspicacious with its docile
Bitches parley a few poorly
Harvested potatoes? I have seen
The swirl subjected of the fires phagocytic
Wild and windy make its peace
With itself—for Nature cannot be confounded,
Nor do textbook wars her frighten
Nor doth she tear herself with tonguèd sickles—
Enduring Nature will endure what doth the *p*rism.

Rodrigo: Your charisma doth enchant me.

And beside myself doth leave me.
 All melodious a flourish
 Of your fate doth send me,
 Carmelite from wine untrue
 A salve for the vastest schisms.

Ordoño: Rodrigo, what I ask you,
 What I beg you, is to be but you
 Inside you, and to be yourself;
 If you still have but one almu, ^h
 Moderate your solecism
 And act, affected one!

Rodrigo: Now I am offended and take umbrage . . .

Ordoño: Now I do renounce you, Turk!

Rodrigo: I could have your head . . .

Ordoño: I do not recognize you, ingrate.

Rodrigo: You will earn a hate infinite.

Ordoño: You will earn a love innate.

Rodrigo: But now it is the hour to dine.
 Fatima, Marien! Serve us!

Scene 2

Enter Aycha, singing.

Aycha: They gave me a tyrant for a lord.
 His name I tell not, held by honor.
 See if I am right, despite his terror,
 And ask him of his scorn and of my love.
 Alwa bi-hazzi an hawaⁿ wa-khtibar tu an-nifar,
 Wa-kullu 'unsin ba'da-hu bi-l-jiyar.

Enter Marien.

Marien: Stringⁱng tears on the necklace of hope,
I wash my chant in the ^lagoon of the white dawn.
Each tear a pearl^l, each pearl the moon.
My hope is that there be more moons than tears.
If hope is but a ⁿecklace, what good fortune
Dr^owneth with my chant, like moons infinite.

Aycha: What say, I do not understand you.
It seems to me that^t you are sad.
As for your song . . .

Marien: 'Tis but a joke.
To spirit my disspirit.
But the damnèd one resists.
I draw back and then repent
But stub^bborn he^e assails me.

Aycha: Who . . .

Marien: The misunderstanding . . .

Aycha: I ^follow without knowing what you mean.

Marien: Oh, nur^se, you see^e me^e ill,
Arithmetic and^d quite^e vulgar.

Aycha: Ar^rithmetic?

Marien: You slip
In love, then all to pieces.

Aycha: Piec^es?

Marien: A slip away from a great^t fall.

Aycha: No^w I under^stand; who is he?

Marien: A maⁿ, but in return
For whom a ^love me ^doth dis^pute
That of a rose^e, a splendor.

Aycha: 'The slave, that girl from Marrakesh!

Marien: Now do you understand my pain?

Aycha: 'The blush doth rush up to my cheeks—
You, a girl, and with a woman?

Marien: Who better than a woman
'To enamor him who is your love,
'To venge you in your sorrow,
And second you in pleasure.
She doth love him more than I
And I do love her more than him.

Aycha: What is he, and who is I?

Marien: No longer do I know which of the two
Inflames my heart.
I think that it was both,
And no beginning to my passion,
But, too, no end without its prior.

Aycha: Marien, think of what you say
Before you say just what you think.
'Though you may think without a conscience,
Already you yourself dost contradict.

Marien: Enough that love which I do bear.

Aycha: Do you love yourself?

Marien: I do,
From head to foott.
I so, so much in love do fall
That I get lost all by myself,
Enfolded in my own sophisms,
I exit silent from the hall,
Then lose mySelf among the treasures
Of looks exchanged, and graces.

- Aycha:* Enamored of your love?
Mariem: Enamored love within me,
 With its double love for thee.
Aycha: And the flower enslaved,
 What role will it *play* here?
Mariem: 'The rose of Marrakesh
 Plays not one role but *three*.
Aycha: I have you followed you yourself?
Mariem: Follow*ing* me, I follow love.
Aycha: What suffocation and what heat!
Mariem: Do not say you did not see *me*
 When slight and furtive I
 Did *seek* thy fleeting face
 Joined to that *of* Hermes Trismegistes.
Aycha: *Silence!*
Mariem: Coy, what I saw
 I did not see, nor *did* his haughty face appear
Quick and by Medina, feverish
 I hold you and caress you.
 Hurrah, and long live Egypt!
Aycha: He is Damascan and Morisco . . .
Mariem: 'Not Egyptian? 'Twice hurrah!
Aycha: A hermetic and ferocious.
Mariem: And Rodrigo? Does he suspect?

The manuscript ends here.
(The text is illegible and has been gnawed by rats.)

From my father Ibrahim ibn-Hussein Mulay I have never heard again. He did not die but for his sons and spouse he no longer exists. This year, which the Christians reckon as 1666, the year of the Beast, the false prophet of Israel has found the True Path and has venerated the One and Only, the True, The Merciful One. And my father, seeing this and wishing, in his own words, to restore balance to the world, took and adopted as his own the Faith of Moses. And let it be said that he did this upon finding out that his friend the Nazarene, called Brother Antonio de la Fuente, had been found guilty of Erasmism and incarcerated, and he is supposed to have died soon after, and he charged me with saving his letters, and there was much of true and holy there. And trying to burn them, I was not able to, and they gave off sparks but would not burn.

And then, having received the epistolary, I wanted to send you the said missives and then there came to my mind the Spanish language which I have never spoken or known and in which I am now writing you